Western celebrates 40 years of 4-year!
President’s Perspective

While our senior college curricula was long ago established and accredited, we continue to develop new and innovative graduate programs while maintaining a strong commitment to providing a college education to all who seek one, thus continuing our “open door” policy through our open enrollment practices. We also continue to be committed to the cultural development of the region through our partnerships with various St. Joseph arts organizations and our own campus arts programs.

We do all of this with an eye toward expanding our facilities and developing a campus master plan. Dr. Marvin Looney, who was Western’s president in 1969, expressed to me that when he opened the doors to three buildings in September 1969, he never envisioned a time when our circle drive would be too small to accommodate our educational needs, our demand for athletic programs would exceed our facilities, and our demand for on-campus housing would outnumber our available beds. It is a testament to Dr. Looney, Dr. Janet Murphy-McCarlthy, Dr. James Scandlen and their governing boards that Western has grown in ways unimaginable in 1969, yet has maintained its commitment to its core values and goals. I look forward with great anticipation to the next 40 years.

Robert A. Vartabedian
President
Leaverton residence hall has undergone renovations this past summer with new carpeting, paint, new electrical fixtures and new furniture in every room. Leaverton Hall was built in 1991.

Western to Wall Street

Five finance majors’ visit to New York City last spring included some special tours and visits, thanks to two alumni.

Steve Koening, who played football for Western and is currently managing director and co-head of Latin America Sales and Training for J.P. Morgan, set up appointments for the group at both J.P. Morgan and BGC Partners. Esther George ’80, first vice president and chief operating officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Mo., arranged an appointment for the group at the New York Federal Reserve Bank.

“When I heard Missouri Western students were coming to New York, I asked if they wanted to come to our offices,” said Steve, who lectures in business classes at Western at least once a year. “I wanted them to get an insight into what it’s like to have a Wall Street job.”

At J.P. Morgan, Steve arranged a meeting between the students and Joyce Chang, managing director and global head of the firm’s emerging markets and credit research group. Joyce has been named by Institutional Investor magazine as the No. 1 emerging markets strategist for seven consecutive years.

At the Federal Reserve Bank, students toured the vault, which holds about $700 billion in gold. The New York location is the only one that stores gold in its vault. The group also met with the vice president of bank supervision who spoke with them about the current state of the economy.

“I was happy to be able to arrange the visit, knowing from my own college experiences that some of my best learning took place outside the classroom,” Esther said. “I had the benefit of professors who encouraged that kind of learning, even 30 years ago.”

“These opportunities would not have been available without Steve and Esther,” said Carol Roever, interim dean of the School of Business who accompanied the students. “Thanks to their help, our students met privately with a number of people who provided key insights into finance and the current economic crisis.”

Law Enforcement Academy serves region

With a change in the curriculum for criminal justice degree programs, Western students can now attend the Western Institute’s Law Enforcement Academy as part of their bachelor’s or associate’s criminal justice degree requirements, earning 18 hours of credit. In the past, the academy was separate from the degree program.

Kip Wilson, associate professor of criminal justice at Western and interim academy director, said students who earn the academy certification along with their degree will be more marketable when they graduate.

He noted that in the past, law enforcement agencies would hire a new recruit and pay for them to go through the academy, so it really wasn’t an issue that the academy was separate. But the agencies don’t have the funds to do that anymore and they usually hire only those who have graduated from the academy.

Another advantage is that now the academy is part of the curriculum, students can receive financial aid for it.

The course includes a great deal of hands-on training.

“We try to merge academics and training,” Kip said. “It’s not designed for a trade but a profession. They (the cadets) get theoretical background along with practical training, and it’s a better academy because of the extra hours.”

“A lot of area professionals have been teaching at the academy for a long time,” he added. “They’re some of the best trained officers in the state.”

Law Enforcement Academy cadets are instructed by Kip Wilson at a staged crime scene.

Western Magazine
National first-place project aids abuse victims

Victims of domestic violence in Buchanan County are now able to seek protection from their abusers online through a web development project that earned a team of Western students first place in a national competition.

Working with the YWCA of St. Joseph and the Buchanan County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, the students developed a web site called St. Joe Safe, which helps victims of domestic violence complete the application for an order of protection in the privacy of their own homes.

“Western students designed the web application, which has been well received by victims in the community,” said Deb McMillion, coordinator of the Buchanan County Domestic Violence Program. “The web site has been very successful, and we are very proud of our students and the project they completed.”

Students in Dwight Scroggins’ “Computer Applications for Decision Making” class, which meets three times a week in a 40-seat classroom and has a long waiting list, worked on designing and building the web site. Scroggins also taught a computer class for the community last spring.

“Dwight Scroggins ‘76, Buchanan Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, the students developed a web site called St. Joe Safe is more complicated than a computer class,” Scroggins said. “The students had to find a way for victims to apply for orders of protection without having to be in public at the courthouse for extended time periods.

“This has always been a barrier to applying and a risk factor while they are here. The new web site will allow these to be done in privacy and safety while being at the courthouse only long enough for a judge to review the application.”

Additionally, the paper application used a lot of legal jargon and was difficult for victims to understand. The online version developed by the students offers help boxes that are written in simple language for every field on the application. They also designed it so that those filling out the application can click on an icon at any time and be immediately taken to a different web site, in case they get interrupted.

“St. Joe Safe is a very powerful tool that has been well received by victims,” said Joel Wright, a junior volunteer coordinator at the YWCA, said. “I am impressed with their work and professionalism. If they have been as vested in this project as we have. We have already had interest from other jurisdictions,” Dwight said. “Just within Missouri, I would expect this effort to benefit thousands of domestic violence victims.”

In the spring, the students entered the web site into a web development competition at a national collegiate conference in Oklahoma City, Okla., and won first place, their second first-place award in that category in as many years. The conference drew more than 600 from student chapters across the country.

Computer Class Draws Crowd

The student developed web site called St. Joe Safe, which was a national first-place project aids abuse victims

When Western began its Learning Communities program in 2003, Dr. Bill Church ‘89, instructor of English, was a member of the original group that attended a Learning Communities Institute. He has presented at national Learning Communities conferences and he has taught at least one class in a Learning Community each year.

So there was a very small learning curve for Bill when he was named the director of Learning Communities this summer where he will serve as a faculty mentor, Dr. Diane Gorczyca, retired.

“Bill has wonderful experience. He’s been very successful in Learning Communities as a faculty member, and he has a lot of passion for Learning Communities,” said Dr. Jeanne Duffron ‘75, interim vice president for academic and student affairs. “He’s open to new ideas and is willing to take on a challenge.”

In the Learning Communities program, a group of first-semester freshmen takes two classes together. The faculty members teaching those classes collaborate so that the courses are somewhat integrated with each other, and the groups may have activities together outside the classroom.

“Universities have discovered that connections are important for students – connections with faculty and with each other,” Bill said.

He said although Western’s Learning Communities have had a lot of success over the years, including studies to show that students who were involved in them have 10 percent higher repetition rates than those who were not, he has a lot of plans and ideas for the program.

The number of communities has dropped in recent years, and he wants to see the numbers rise. This fall, 10 Learning Communities were offered to incoming freshmen; at one time, more than 20 were offered.

He also wants to encourage Learning Communities to engage in more service learning projects and more activities outside of the classroom. He plans to offer faculty training and perhaps expand Learning Communities beyond the first semester.

“It’s going to be fun,” Bill said of his new position. “I love it. It’s very exciting.”

Incubator gets new tenants and funding

Four tenants now occupy the Christopher S. “Kit” Bond Science and Technology Incubator building. The incubator is an emerging animal health company whose first commercial product is the only approved treatment in the United States for feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus, started operating in the incubator in April. DT Search and Designs LLC, which is an emerging life sciences company, is a spinoff of Research Animal Systems Inc. (RASI). RASI produces products in military telecommunications, animal waste management and other industries; and the United States Animal Health Association (USSHA) received a non-profit organization dedicated to controlling animal diseases in the U.S. The Incubator also has space in the incubator.

There is about 10,000 sq. feet available in the 25,000 sq.-foot building, which could accommodate eight to 10 tenants.

Additionally, due to the work of Rep. Sam Graves, the incubator was awarded $285,000 from the federal government in March to be used for the purchase of equipment for a regulated lab for training.
Larry, associate professor of finance, and Cathy, professor of economics, have come up with a new research method that has taken conventional risk aversion research to a virtual level. Last year, Cathy was researching using video games as a teaching tool when she read about a consulting firm for the Army that had modified the game “Neverwinter Nights” to study the behavior of pacifying teams. She realized that modifying a video game could change the way financial risk aversion (one of Larry’s research interests) was studied into something that had never been done before. The professors explained that in the past, almost all research studying financial risk aversion involved giving participants a sheet of paper with 10 different pairs of choices listed, and the subjects select one choice for each pair. For example, the first choice is A – 10% chance of $40 and 90% chance of $32 OR B – 10% chance of $77 and 90% chance of $2; progressing to the last choice, A – 100% chance of $40 and 0% chance of $32 OR B – 100% chance of $77 and 0% chance of $2. The professors believed that the results of those experiments may be different if people faced one choice at a time, in no particular order, rather than seeing all the choices at once, in progressive order, on the paper. “Choices you make in life are not necessarily in any order,” Larry said.

After obtaining permission to modify the Medieval-themed “Neverwinter Nights” for their research, the Lawsons reprogrammed the game into the contemporary town of Santa Catalina, where the characters assist the local police Drug Strike Force. In the game, players are instructed to find and seize nine pairs of crates of illegal drugs hidden in locations around the town. For each pair of crates they encounter, the players are given the probability of the amount of drugs in each crate, which are the same as the first nine probability choices that subjects are given on a sheet of paper in the conventional research.

When students are finished playing the video game, they view all their choices collectively and have the opportunity to change their selections. Then they are paid according to which crates they chose throughout the game.

In their pilot study of 91 participants, the professors found that the subjects’ final choices differed in both their risk levels and consistency from their first choices. There was less consistency and more risk-taking when decisions were made one at a time, in random order, as in the video game, than when all choices were given at once on a sheet of paper. Approximately 13 percent of 91 subjects’ final choices displayed some inconsistency, which is comparable to other studies, the Lawsons said. However, approximately 42 percent of the subjects’ first choices exhibited inconsistency in the video game experiment.

Heather Strever, a junior nursing major who volunteered for the study, said she doesn’t consider herself a risk-taker, and the choices throughout the game were pretty easy to make. “I told myself I would take a couple risks and that’s all.” She said even though she was given the opportunity to change her choices at the end of the game, she stayed with her first instinct and didn’t make any changes. Her choices netted her $39.

Junior Rebecca Weddle said she liked the role playing and was pleasantly surprised at the quality of the game. She was also quite happy with her choices and was heading out to go shopping. She was paid $43.

“If I’m getting paid to do something I like, why not?” said Richard Sands, freshman, whose favorite video game is “Call of Duty.” “I’m not great at video games, but it was pretty easy once I figured it out.” He did admit to blowing up one crate, however, before he got the hang of it.

(Disclaimer: the game is nonviolent; the characters in the game wear Kevlar® vests, so no one is injured even if a bomb goes off.) “It was actually a lot of fun; I wanted to keep playing,” Richard said. He went home happy with $38.

The Lawsons said an advantage of the research is that their methods could easily be duplicated by other researchers, as there are many inexpensive video games that can be modified without learning advanced video game programming skills. However, the professors admit that they had a little help and advice on modifying the game - from their teenage son. “Tim helped a lot. He played it several times to see if it was challenging. We tried to make it cool,” Cathy said with a laugh.

The professors believe their research has implications beyond the lab. “Thousands of risky decisions are made by individuals daily,” the Lawsons said. “A better understanding of how they do this and how to improve on those choices could lessen the impact of bad decisions on mortgage loans, energy use or job choice. We believe this research offers a limited but important contribution to understanding and helping to resolve such problems.” In the future, the professors said they plan to make more game modifications, such as changing the background music, lighting, etc., to see if that affects the players’ decision-making. They also want to expand their test group beyond college students to include bank lending officers, securities brokers, insurance agents, and personal financial planners.

“This type of virtual research tool has the potential to advance understanding across a wide range of experimental topics,” Larry said. “We’re finding things that are new that will challenge the existing theory.”
Spring Sports

Softball

Winning became a way of life for the Griffon softball team as they shattered several school and conference records enroute to a 47-12 overall record and an appearance in the NCAA South Central Regional Tournament, their fourth NCAA tournament appearance in the last five seasons.

After a 3-4 start, the club went on to an amazing school and MIAA record 32-game winning streak between Feb. 20 and April 10 and were ranked as high as 19th in the NFCA Division II national poll.

The club had seven All-MIAA selections, including five on the first team - pitcher Allison Jones, Mitchellville, Iowa; Shannon Privor, second base, Omaha, Neb.; centerfielder Becky Diehl, Derby, Kan.; right fielder Brittany Diehl, Moline, Iowa; and second baseman Shannon Diehl, St. Louis; and designated player Sam Buchanan, Red Deer, Alberta, Canada.

The team is coached by Jen Bagley, woman's baseball, who was named MIAA Coach of the Year. She guided the Griffons to a 16-4 record in the MIAA. Jen is in her eighth season at Western and has accumulated an overall record of 267-185 during her career.

Baseball

Griffon baseball continues to set new marks under head coach Buzz Verduzco as the club finished the 2009 campaign with a 34-22 record, the eighth consecutive winning season under Buzz, and the second highest win total in school history. The club won 15 of their last 18 games, including an eight-game winning streak to close out the season.

Five players were named to the All- MIAA team, including three first-team selections: pitcher A.J. Huttlenlocker, Buckley, Wash.; outfielder Troy Landis, Blue Springs, Mo.; and utility player Andy Hebrard, Clackamas, Ore.

Griffon Rogers Allen signed a rookie free agent contract with the St. Louis Rams.

Golf

Coach Jim Perry’s ’61, men’s golf team had a young squad during the 2008-09 season. A year filled with ups and downs was led by a first-place finish at the Pasta House Drury Invitational last fall and a six-place finish at the MIAA Men’s Golf Championships to close out the season. Caleb Carter, St. Joseph, Mo., garnered first-team All-MIAA honors.

The women’s golf team closed out their season finishing third in the inaugural MIAA Women’s Golf Championships. Coupled with the return of all players from this year’s squad and a strong recruiting class coming in for 2009-10, the squad looks forward to a good coming season. The team is coached by Cathy Habermehl.

Tennis

The tennis team, coached by Ron Selkirk, closed out their season competing in the MIAA Tennis Championships as part of the MIAA Titelfest. The squad was defeated in opening round action. The team loses two seniors to graduation - Laura Ratten, Carroll, Iowa, and Amber Adams, Owasso, Okla.

The Board of Governors gave preliminary approval to the site in May. Construction of the softball fields is scheduled to begin this fall and be completed by the 2010 NCAA Division II Season.

Griffon men’s and women’s basketball both finished in the top 20 in NCAA Division II for average attendance during the 2008-2009 season. The Griffon men ranked 15th in the country out of 244 NCAA Division II institutions, averaging 2,083 fans per game over 12 home dates, while the Griffon women ranked seventh in the country out of 244 NCAA Division II institutions, averaging 1,637 fans over 11 home dates. Thanks to all of our fans for your excellent support throughout the season!
In the Global Viewpoint class, students spend the semester in class, learning all about the country they plan to visit and its business climate, and then spend two weeks at the end of the semester visiting that country. “They get a first-hand experience of the global business economy,” said Dr. Faye smith, professor of business, who taught the class.

So along with all the “tourist” stops, which included visiting an active volcano, hiking to waterfalls and spending a couple days in a native village, the trip also included tours of four companies, several panel discussions with business leaders and a look at villages known for their handicrafted items. They also met with the minister of economic coordination, which is a similar position to the United States’ secretary of commerce. Students even helped dig a ditch for a water line in one village. “It was a lot of work,” Dominique said. “These women do it every day and I was dying.”

Sonja Streeter ’09, who left for Ecuador last spring for their Global Viewpoint class.

“Again in an instant.”

Leone. “It was amazing. I would do it all over again in an instant.”

Dominique had taken a previous study away trip to Argentina and was surprised at the difference in the cultures. She was hoping to line up an internship with one of the businesses the group toured in Quito, as she plans to work in South America after she graduates next May.

“It really changes your perspective; it really is a life-changing experience,” Dominique said of the trip. “I had the time of my life and I would recommend it to anybody.”

Although the professors’ environs were foreign; their students were not. They all hailed from universities in the United States, the majority from Missouri. And, Phil taught with five other faculty members from Missouri institutions. He said one of his additional responsibilities that he enjoyed was to accompany the students on field trips as part of their British Culture class.

This spring, Don plans to teach two more classes in London - one on London’s fringe theaters and one on musical theatre. “Study away programs are important,” Phil said. “It’s a good opportunity for students, and faculty, too.”

Professors Teach abroad

According to Don Lillie, assistant professor of theatre, there are two “theatre towns” in the world – London and New York – and he was thrilled when he had the opportunity last summer to teach an introduction to Theatre class in one of them. Through the Missouri Consortium for International Programs and Studies, Dr. Maureen Raffenburger, associate professor of physical therapy, spent a month volunteering in a hospital in India. When she returned to the same hospital this past summer to volunteer, she brought three physical therapist assistant students with her.

The group spent three weeks practicing physical therapy at the Good Shepherd Hospital in Puttur, Andhra Pradesh. An Introduction to Theatre class in one of the United States, the majority from Missouri. And, Phil taught with five other faculty members from Missouri institutions. He said one of his additional responsibilities that he enjoyed was to accompany the students on field trips as part of their British Culture class.

This spring, Don plans to teach two more classes in London - one on London’s fringe theaters and one on musical theatre.

“Study away programs are important,” Phil said. “It’s a good opportunity for students, and faculty, too.”

Students Serve in India

Last summer, Dr. Maureen Raffenburger, associate professor of physical therapy, spent a month volunteering in a hospital in India. When she returned to the same hospital this past summer to volunteer, she brought three physical therapist assistant students with her. The group spent three weeks practicing physical therapy at the Good Shepherd Hospital in Puttur, Andhra Pradesh. For Erin Bass, Amanda Francis and Natalie Jegeris, all May graduates, their service work in India fulfilled one of their clinical requirements for their degree. But they said they learned so much more than just physical therapy.

“They learned so much about the culture and about yourself,” Natalie said. “Their ideas of medicine are very different from ours,” Maureen said of their patients in India. For example, she said one patient was fearful of her son having surgery because she thought it would cause brain damage. Maureen explained that the hospital they worked in practiced “Westernized” medicine, but the students had the opportunity to watch an ancient Indian practice of bone setting without surgery or anesthetic at the world-renowned Bone Setters Hospital.

“Students Serve in India”

Last summer, Dr. Maureen Raffenburger, associate professor of physical therapy, spent a month volunteering in a hospital in India. When she returned to the same hospital this past summer to volunteer, she brought three physical therapist assistant students with her. The group spent three weeks practicing physical therapy at the Good Shepherd Hospital in Puttur, Andhra Pradesh. For Erin Bass, Amanda Francis and Natalie Jegeris, all May graduates, their service work in India fulfilled one of their clinical requirements for their degree. But they said they learned so much more than just physical therapy.

“They learned so much about the culture and about yourself,” Natalie said. “Their ideas of medicine are very different from ours,” Maureen said of their patients in India. For example, she said one patient was fearful of her son having surgery because she thought it would cause brain damage. Maureen explained that the hospital they worked in practiced “Westernized” medicine, but the students had the opportunity to watch an ancient Indian practice of bone setting without surgery or anesthetic at the world-renowned Bone Setters Hospital.

“‘It’s pretty gruesome,’” Natalie said of the procedure they witnessed. “Although the ancient procedure works sometimes, depending on the injury, some of the patients they saw at Good Shepherd had been treated at Bone Setters and developed problems with their injury.

“You can’t change the way they think, but you do your best to provide care,” Natalie said. “We tried to be mindful of their religious beliefs and how it plays into their care.”

The four estimated they saw about 125 patients for about 375-400 treatments throughout their 16 days of volunteering.

“I really hope I touched people as much as they touched me,” Erin said. “I also hope they learned from us, especially the necessity of seeking medical attention.”

“It was a fantastic experience,” Natalie said. It was a great opportunity for me to provide a service. I love people and I want to care for them.

Maureen said the four of them suffered some illnesses and worked very hard in a challenging environment. “But they rose to the occasion and did great work. When we got ready to leave and looked back at the impact we had made, it was good.”

Kerri’s Ireland Blog

Two Western students spent the Spring 2009 semester studying in Ireland. Below are excerpts from a blog written by senior Kerri Robins about her experience.

Last fall, Kayla, a 19-year-old from Lethbridge, Alberta, decided to study abroad. We chose the National University of Ireland in Maynooth, County Kildare, I look like a gazillion pics. I couldn’t help it - Ireland is gorgeous!!

Kerri’s Ireland Blog
Kerri's Ireland blog continued

Irish Road Trip: I just spent the last week on a road trip covering pretty much all of Ireland!!! Where to begin??!! Well Sunday my BFF Bri came to visit and we rented a car!!! The GPS was confused by the new road construction so we drove around Dublin for 6 hours. We get back to Maynooth in one piece!

Aran Islands Amazing, Breathtaking, Beautiful. Magnificent. Gorgeous. . . these are just a few words I would use to describe the scenery of Irish Mo!! The day trip back to Maynooth was also filled with amazing scenery that reminded me so much of Missouri in the spring and summer months. Staring out the window at the green hills and the distant scenery of Inish Mor!!! The day trip was just a few words I would use to describe the scenery of Inish Mor!!!

Aran Islands Amazing, Breathtaking, Beautiful. Magnificent. Gorgeous. . . these are just a few words I would use to describe the scenery of Irish Mo!! The day trip back to Maynooth was also filled with amazing scenery that reminded me so much of Missouri in the spring and summer months. Staring out the window at the green hills and the distant scenery of Inish Mor!!!

So the people are very friendly but the Profs usually have an inviting open door. I miss that.

Bri came to visit and we rented a car!!!! Where to begin??? Well Sunday my BFF Bri came to visit and we rented a car!!!! Where to begin???

For home!

Irish Fare
Oh and another thing. They don’t have Mexican food here. All I wanted was a frozen burrito!!!!!! NO such luck. Oh well I am going to attempt to make tacos next week if I can find any taco seasonings. I may have to have some sent in a care package from home LOL.

Campus Life
So the people are very friendly but the campus is a bit different from home. Everything is so open at home whereas campus is a bit different from home. So the people are very friendly but the Profs usually have an inviting open door. I miss that.

Irish Road Trip: I just spent the last week on a road trip covering pretty much all of Ireland!!! Where to begin??!! Well Sunday my BFF Bri came to visit and we rented a car!!! The GPS was confused by the new road construction so we drove around Dublin for 6 hours. We get back to Maynooth in one piece!

Griffins abroad

Kerri’s Ireland blog

employees honored

Fifteen employees were recognized last spring for their outstanding work at Western:

Distinguished Professor Award
- Joanne Katz, professor of legal studies
- Dr. Jason Baker, associate professor of biology
- Dr. Kelly Henty, associate professor of psychology
- David Tushaus, associate professor of legal studies
- Dr. William Russell, assistant professor of physical education
- Dr. Kristen Walton, assistant professor of biology

Jesse Lee Myers Excellence in Teaching Award
- Suzanne Kissoc, assistant professor of legal studies
- Dr. Brett Luthans, professor of management
- Dr. George Yang, associate professor of manufacturing technology
- Dr. Daniel Mclvane, associate professor of psychology
- Jesse Lee Myers Excellence in Teaching Award
- Suzanne Kissoc, assistant professor of legal studies
- Dr. Brett Luthans, professor of management
- Dr. George Yang, associate professor of manufacturing technology
- Dr. Daniel Mclvane, associate professor of psychology

Dr. James V. Mehl Outstanding Faculty Scholarship Award
- Dr. Stephen Morris, assistant professor of legal studies
- Patty Hattenbower, assistant professor of physical education
- Carlyn Howard, purchasing
- Dr. C. Phil Mullins, professor of philosophy
- Elke Rainsburger, physical plant
- Frank Thomas, associate professor of music
- John Walker ’85, director, Regional Law Enforcement Academy
- Kendra Winklison, counseling and testing
- Dr. Gerald Zwerink, professor of chemistry

James J. Scanlon Service-Leader Award
- Dr. Joanne Katz, professor of legal studies
- Dr. Jason Baker, associate professor of biology
- Dr. Kelly Henty, associate professor of psychology
- David Tushaus, associate professor of legal studies
- Dr. William Russell, assistant professor of physical education

Congratulations to 15 employees who retired:
- Larry Andrews ’73, professor of criminal justice
- Dr. David Bennett, assistant professor of music
- Dr. Diane Gerecy, professor of communication studies
- Patricia Graves, registrar’s office
- Sharon Gray ’62, associate professor of music
- Bonnie Gregory, assistant professor of nursing
- Jeanne Harmon-Miller, associate professor of art
- Dr. C. Phil Mullins, professor of philosophy
- Elke Rainsburger, physical plant
- Frank Thomas, associate professor of music
- John Walker ’85, director, Regional Law Enforcement Academy
- Kendra Winklison, counseling and testing
- Dr. Gerald Zwerink, professor of chemistry

James J. Scanlon Service-Leader Award
- Dr. Joanne Katz, professor of legal studies
- Dr. Jason Baker, associate professor of biology
- Dr. Kelly Henty, associate professor of psychology
- David Tushaus, associate professor of legal studies
- Dr. William Russell, assistant professor of physical education

Congratulations to 15 employees who retired:
- Larry Andrews ’73, professor of criminal justice
- Dr. David Bennett, assistant professor of music
- Dr. Diane Gerecy, professor of communication studies
- Patricia Graves, registrar’s office
- Sharon Gray ’62, associate professor of music
- Bonnie Gregory, assistant professor of nursing
- Jeanne Harmon-Miller, associate professor of art
- Dr. C. Phil Mullins, professor of philosophy
- Elke Rainsburger, physical plant
- Frank Thomas, associate professor of music
- John Walker ’85, director, Regional Law Enforcement Academy
- Kendra Winklison, counseling and testing
- Dr. Gerald Zwerink, professor of chemistry

The book sells for $12.95, and all proceeds will fund student scholarships. To order a book or for more information, call 816-371-4237 or go online to http://www.missouriwestern.edu/president/book.
Forty years ago this fall, 2,336 students stepped on to the new Missouri Western College campus for the first time with the new opportunity to earn a four-year degree. On the following pages are articles about two legislators contributions to that milestone, alumni memories of the new campus, the president’s vision for the future, and a painting that is now back on campus.

Next time you drive in the main entrance of Western and onto the circle drive around campus, take note of the names of the streets you are driving on – the entrance is known as Ronald Reed Jr. Way, and the circle drive is Downs Drive, named for the late John Downs ’38. The four-year institution we know today is the legacy of those two men who served in the state legislature in the 1960s.

Bob Slater, who was a newspaper reporter at that time for what is now the St. Joseph News-Press, said Western would not be a four-year institution today if it had not been for Rep. Reed, who currently practices law at a local firm, and Sen. Downs. “They did a great job without a lot of public appreciation.”

In a booklet Rep. Reed wrote, “Reflections on the Founding of Missouri Western State University,” he said, “Contrary to what may be the current view, a benign creator did not look down from above and say ‘Let there be Missouri Western.’ Rather, it was the result of a political struggle, up close and confrontational.”

Confrontational, he said, because in the mid-60s, it was well known in the state legislature that Sen. Downs was obsessed with the notion of a four-year college in St. Joseph. The bill withstood discussion, changes and compromise and was signed six months later by Gov. Warren Hearnes in Joplin, Mo., in July 1965.

“The four-year college bill metamorphosed many times from birth to final passage,” Rep. Reed said in his booklet. “Like all compromises, it did not satisfy everyone, but it worked.”

“Their opposition threw up every road block they could,” Bob said.

That bill provided for the establishment of an independent state senior college, to be known as Missouri Western College, when the following criteria were met: the junior college acquired a campus, it met the requirements established by the Board of Curators of Missouri University and its enrollment trends constituted sufficient justification.

In February 1965, before the Board of Trustees for the new district had had a chance to organize, Sen. Downs asked Rep. Reed if he thought the 130 acres near 36th St. and Freder-ick Ave. (west of Bishop LeBlond High School), owned by the St. Joseph State Hospital, would be a good location for a campus. “I don’t know if the idea was originally his (Sen. Downs’) or someone else’s burst of genius,” Rep. Reed said. “But I said yes, neither of us having any idea of what was needed for a college campus.”

Rep. Reed noted that they were in a hurry to introduce the legislation regarding the college campus so that it had time to pass in the current session, so no real study was done on the property. “If we were going to get state land, we had to get something in the works. We were just a couple of legislators trying to build a college.”

So Sen. Downs introduced a bill which authorized the transfer of the property to the Junior College District. However, a Senate committee attached a price tag to it, so by the time the governor signed it, the Junior College District had an option to purchase the property rather than just having it transferred to them.

A few days later, Rep. Reed and Sen. Downs simultaneously filed bills in the House and Senate to establish a four-year college in St. Joseph. The bill withstood long and winding road: JC to MWC

The long and winding road: JC to MWC

The long and winding road: JC to MWC

The long and winding road: JC to MWC

Rep. Reed, “but virtually all of them were mollified once the rationale was explained.”

The board studied six other properties in the area, announcing in October 1966 that a 390-acre tract east of Interstate 29 along Mitchell Ave., which was outside of city limits, seemed the most suitable for a new four-year college.

Of the total 390 acres, 135 acres were part of the state hospital’s dairy farm, and in June 1967, the governor passed a bill which authorized conveyance of those acres to the Junior College District for $27,000 and rescinded the option to buy the 130 acres on Frederick Ave.

On May 10, 1966, voters in the Junior College District passed a $6.055 million bond issue to build four buildings on the new campus (Poppelwell, Hearnes, Agenstein and Potter). Although no land had been purchased, the 130-acre tract on Frederick Ave. was promoted as the site in the bond campaign.

At about the same time the bond issue passed, Sen. Downs was beginning to recon-sider the wisdom of that location because of potential traffic problems, limited entrances, and no opportunity to expand beyond the original property. In June, he convinced the newly-established Board of Trustees to look at other properties besides the tract on Frederick Ave.

And the controversy began.

“A lot of people who promoted the bond issue felt that if that’s what they said (in the campaign), then that’s what you should do,” Rep. Reed said. But he explained that the land bill gave the Junior College District only the option to buy the 130 acres, and that was never a ‘cut and dried’ deal.

One board member resigned. The newspaper printed scathing editorials.

“A lot of community leaders stuck their necks out on the original site and didn’t get any warning that the board was looking at different sites,” Bob said in explaining the rancor in the community. “Everyone was for the college, just the site was the controversy.”

“There was quite a bit of furor,” said Rep. Reed, “but virtually all of them were mollified once the rationale was explained.”

The governor signed it, the Junior College District had an option to purchase the property rather than just having it transferred to them.

On May 10, 1966, voters in the Junior College District passed a $6.055 million bond issue to build four buildings on the new campus (Poppelwell, Hearnes, Agenstein and Potter). Although no land had been purchased, the 130-acre tract on Frederick Ave. was promoted as the site in the bond campaign.

At about the same time the bond issue passed, Sen. Downs was beginning to recons twelve significant steps toward establishing a four-year college in St. Joseph. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Warren Hearnes in July 1965.

“Four significant steps toward establishing a four-year college in St. Joseph occurred in January 1965, when voters in St. Joseph and the surrounding areas voted to establish a junior college district to support the current junior college. That meant the new district was now empowered to levy taxes, issue bonds and build buildings, and a Board of Trustees for the district was established.

The first significant step toward establishing a four-year college in St. Joseph was the Board of Trustees for the new district was now empowered to levy taxes, issue bonds and build buildings, and a Board of Trustees for the district had had a chance to organize, Sen. Downs asked Rep. Reed if he thought the 130 acres near 36th St. and Frederick Ave. (west of Bishop LeBlond High School), owned by the St. Joseph State Hospital, would be a good location for a campus. “I don’t know if the idea was originally his (Sen. Downs’) or someone else’s burst of genius,” Rep. Reed said. “But I said yes, neither of us having any idea of what was needed for a college campus.”

Rep. Reed noted that they were in a hurry to introduce the legislation regarding the college campus so that it had time to pass in the current session, so no real study was done on the property. “If we were going to get state land, we had to get something in the works. We were just a couple of legislators trying to build a college.”

So Sen. Downs introduced a bill which authorized the transfer of the property to the Junior College District. However, a Senate committee attached a price tag to it, so by the time the governor signed it, the Junior College District had an option to purchase the property rather than just having it transferred to them.

On May 10, 1966, voters in the Junior College District passed a $6.055 million bond issue to build four buildings on the new campus (Poppelwell, Hearnes, Agenstein and Potter). Although no land had been purchased, the 130-acre tract on Frederick Ave. was promoted as the site in the bond campaign.

At about the same time the bond issue passed, Sen. Downs was beginning to reconsider the wisdom of that location because of potential traffic problems, limited entrances, and no opportunity to expand beyond the original property. In June, he convinced the newly-established Board of Trustees to look at other properties besides the tract on Frederick Ave.

And the controversy began.

“A lot of people who promoted the bond issue felt that if that’s what they said (in the campaign), then that’s what you should do,” Rep. Reed said. But he explained that the land bill gave the Junior College District only the option to buy the 130 acres, and that was never a ‘cut and dried’ deal.

One board member resigned. The newspaper printed scathing editorials.

“A lot of community leaders stuck their necks out on the original site and didn’t get any warning that the board was looking at different sites,” Bob said in explaining the rancor in the community. “Everyone was for the college, just the site was the controversy.”

“There was quite a bit of furor,” said Rep. Reed, “but virtually all of them were mollified once the rationale was explained.”

The board studied six other properties in the area, announcing in October 1966 that a 390-acre tract east of Interstate 29 along Mitchell Ave., which was outside of city limits, seemed the most suitable for a new four-year college.

Of the total 390 acres, 135 acres were part of the state hospital’s dairy farm, and in June 1967, the governor passed a bill which authorized conveyance of those acres to the Junior College District for $27,000 and rescinded the option to buy the 130 acres on Frederick Ave.

On May 10, 1966, voters in the Junior College District passed a $6.055 million bond issue to build four buildings on the new campus (Poppelwell, Hearnes, Agenstein and Potter). Although no land had been purchased, the 130-acre tract on Frederick Ave. was promoted as the site in the bond campaign.

At about the same time the bond issue passed, Sen. Downs was beginning to reconsider the wisdom of that location because of potential traffic problems, limited entrances, and no opportunity to expand beyond the original property. In June, he convinced the newly-established Board of Trustees to look at other properties besides the tract on Frederick Ave.

And the controversy began.

“A lot of people who promoted the bond issue felt that if that’s what they said (in the campaign), then that’s what you should do,” Rep. Reed said. But he explained that the land bill gave the Junior College District only the option to buy the 130 acres, and that was never a ‘cut and dried’ deal.

One board member resigned. The newspaper printed scathing editorials.

“A lot of community leaders stuck their necks out on the original site and didn’t get any warning that the board was looking at different sites,” Bob said in explaining the rancor in the community. “Everyone was for the college, just the site was the controversy.”

“There was quite a bit of furor,” said Rep. Reed, “but virtually all of them were mollified once the rationale was explained.”

The board studied six other properties in the area, announcing in October 1966 that a 390-acre tract east of Interstate 29 along Mitchell Ave., which was outside of city limits, seemed the most suitable for a new four-year college.

Of the total 390 acres, 135 acres were part of the state hospital’s dairy farm, and in June 1967, the governor passed a bill which authorized conveyance of those acres to the Junior College District for $27,000 and rescinded the option to buy the 130 acres on Frederick Ave. The
thought might happen. Not because we had little hope, it was just "ty," Rep. Reed said of the college. "But it far exceeded what we ever thought it would develop into what it is today."

"We had great hopes for what it would do for the community," Bob said. "No one imagined it would have so many facilities." John and Ron did a great job in overcoming a lot of opposition and making it happen," Bob Cummings '78. "There were no windbreaks and on a cold day it was like a knife going right through you."

Besides the addition of several buildings, another change to the campus from the early days is the north campus, said Dennis Johnson '73, who today is a university police officer. That area, north of the Mo. Department of Conservation to Faraon St., consisted of a lot of weeds, several dilapidated buildings and a farm house. The agriculture department cleared a lot of the area and maintained a farm on the property. For a short time in 1972-73, exotic animals, including longhorn steers, a miniature mule, pygmy goats and a Sicilian donkey, were brought in from Grant's Farm in St. Louis and housed on campus.

Dave Hackman '73, arrived on a basketball scholarship as a freshman in 1969 and lived with fellow teammates downtown for two years since the residence halls weren’t ready until the fall of 1971. The team played in the old city auditorium for one year before the gym in the Looney Complex was completed. "It’s unbelievable how much it has grown," he said of the campus. "I didn’t even think it would grow that much."

Alumni remember early campus

We asked several alumni to talk about their experiences as the first students on the new campus.

Three buildings and a trailer for a student union were open for business when the Fall 1969 semester began on Western’s brand new campus east of Interstate 29. Any conversation with alumni who were students at that time invariably starts with talk of the sparse landscape and the wind. "Believe me, it was really chilly walking between buildings," said Bob Cummings ’78. "There were no windbreaks and on a cold day it was like a knife going right through you."

Some things never change. John Burgess ’71, talked about the parking problems on the new campus. However, he said they had parking problems of a different sort. "The parking lots were made up of broken concrete, and the sharp edges provided many a flat tire."

"No one can possibly describe how exciting an adventure it has been to see the campus grow from the junior college building downtown to the beautiful campus it is today," Jeanne said. "We feel we have been truly blessed to have been a part of the history."

In June 1969, Jeannie Archer ’71, a student at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, married a young chemistry lab instructor at Western, Len Archer. She said administrators convinced her that she needed to transfer to the new four-year campus that fall because they needed students. "It was a real fun time," Len, who still teaches at Western, remembers sharing office space with the art and psychology departments until more buildings were completed.

Jim Jeffer’s ’73, remembers the fountain where the Glenn E. Marion Memorial clock tower now stands. He also remembers when someone put laundry detergent in the fountain. "There were suds all the way to the administration building."

Enhancing Academics

Dr. Vartabedian noted that the enhancement of the life sciences will continue to be an important area of development, and the renovation and expansion of Agenstein/Remington Halls and the addition of the science and technology incubator on campus will help meet that goal.

Dirck Clark ’85, former chair of the Board of Governors, agreed. "We’re going to create the next generation’s workforce for life science companies in St. Joseph."

A long-term goal of Dr. Vartabedian’s is to develop the fine and performing arts areas into a school of fine arts with its own dean. "I believe you can’t have a strong comprehensive university without a strong commitment to the arts," he said. "It’s important to have a sense of where the university is going, and it has to be a vision shared by the constituents as well," Dr. Vartabedian said.

The road to the future

As Western celebrates its 40th anniversary as a four-year institution and reflects on the past 40 years, it’s appropriate to envision what the future may hold. On July 1, 2008, Dr. Robert Vartabedian became Western’s fourth president since 1969. Since then he has visited with countless alumni, donors, legislators, parents, students, faculty and staff, listening to their ideas and crafting his vision for the university.

"It’s important to have a sense of where the university is going, and it has to be a vision shared by the constituents as well,” Dr. Vartabedian said.

The president said his vision focuses on four main areas—enhancing academics, growth of the student population, campus beautification and athletics.

Student Population Growth

Although he admits it’s a “stretch goal,” Dr. Vartabedian’s vision includes a student population of 10,000 by 2020. He noted that it is not unrealistic because the university has had five consecutive years of record enrollments, and this fall, the numbers are close to 6,000. Additionally, Western’s location offers the potential for more growth because of the large population within 100 miles of St. Joseph.
“This growth reflects a vote of approval from the region, and if we continue to grow we will have a more significant economic impact on the region.”

The immediate needs to manage the growth, Dr. Vartabedian said, are the renovation of Potter Hall, which houses the art, theatre, film and music departments, and student housing. Part of his vision for more housing includes upscale student housing. Dirk said he would like to see the development of a Greek village to house the social fraternities and sororities.

Campus Beautification

Dr. Vartabedian said campus beautification goes hand-in-hand with student population growth, because the way a campus looks is one of the top three factors high school students consider when choosing a college.

Three of his campus beautification goals are underway: a permanent sign for the Faraon St. entrance, new building signs throughout the campus and aerator fountains in the three ponds that are visible from Downs Drive and James McCarthy Drive. Funding for the Faraon St. sign was provided by Brent Portier ’82, and Portier Outdoor Advertising.

“Those things are amazing,” said Dr. Vartabedian of the three projects. “They can really change the look of a campus very quickly.”

In the future, Dr. Vartabedian’s vision for campus beautification includes more outdoor art, an outdoor amphitheater and possibly a golf driving range. “The underlying premise is that we all enjoy the natural beauty of the region.” Work also began this past summer on the Spratt Memorial Stadium visitor side renovations, the spring sports complex and the region.”

The athletics department has many exciting events coming in the near future, Dr. Vartabedian said, including the NCAA Elite 8 men’s basketball tournament and the NCAA national softball tournament and the Kansas City Chiefs indoor training facility.

Professional endowment and other emerging needs—have surpassed their goals. “There has been a lot of community support, and it’s been great to see,” Pat said of the campaign. “The community truly sees the value of the university.”

“I’m very thankful for the work of my predecessors. They did a lot of smart things to put the university in a good position for the near future, Dr. Vartabedian said, are the renovation of Potter Hall, which houses the art, theatre, film and music departments, and student housing. Part of his vision for more housing includes upscale student housing. Dirk said he would like to see the development of a Greek village to house the social fraternities and sororities.

Campus Beautification

Dr. Vartabedian said campus beautification goes hand-in-hand with student population growth, because the way a campus looks is one of the top three factors high school students consider when choosing a college.

Three of his campus beautification goals are underway: a permanent sign for the Faraon St. entrance, new building signs throughout the campus and aerator fountains in the three ponds that are visible from Downs Drive and James McCarthy Drive. Funding for the Faraon St. sign was provided by Brent Portier ’82, and Portier Outdoor Advertising.

“Those things are amazing,” said Dr. Vartabedian of the three projects. “They can really change the look of a campus very quickly.”

In the future, Dr. Vartabedian’s vision for campus beautification includes more outdoor art, an outdoor amphitheater and possibly a golf driving range. “The underlying premise is that we all enjoy the natural beauty of the region.” Work also began this past summer on the Spratt Memorial Stadium visitor side renovations, the spring sports complex and the region.”

The athletics department has many exciting events coming in the near future, Dr. Vartabedian said, including the NCAA Elite 8 men’s basketball tournament and the NCAA national softball tournament and the Kansas City Chiefs indoor training facility.

Professional endowment and other emerging needs—have surpassed their goals. “There has been a lot of community support, and it’s been great to see,” Pat said of the campaign. “The community truly sees the value of the university.”

“T

Thanks to a deadline extension added to the recently enacted Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, if you are 70½ or older you now have the opportunity until the end of 2009 to use your IRA funds to make a charitable gift to Western without the amount of the gift counting as a taxable distribution.

To qualify:

• You must be 70½ or older

• You must transfer your funds directly from your IRA accounts to the charity

• Qualifying gifts are limited to $100,000 per year

• You must make an outright gift (life-income gifts such as charitable gift annuities or remainder trusts do not qualify)

• Gifts do not generate a federal income-tax deduction

These charitable IRA transfers do not count toward the federal limits on deductible charitable contributions. This makes such transfers particularly attractive if you have made other gifts during the year equal to or in excess of the deductible limits or if you have large unused deductions from previous years carried forward to this year.

If you are eligible to benefit from this opportunity, do not delay. Contact us so we can assist you in planning an IRA gift.

816-271-5647 or http://missouriwestern.giftplanners.org
Alumni news

Commemoration, Spring 2009

At the Spring 2009 Commencement, Wes and Patsy ’79 Remington (above) and Steven L. Craig (lower right) received honorary doctorate degrees. Also, 12 graduate students participated in Western’s first hooding ceremony for master’s degrees.

President’s Leadership Summit

Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Western’s president, hosted 18 alumni and friends from Missouri, Texas, Colorado, Pennsylvania and Washington DC for a leadership summit last spring.

The theme for the summit was “Planning for and Managing Growth: A Vision for the Future.” Dr. Vartabedian shared his vision with the group, and the three discussion topics for the day were: image, alumni engagement and building and managing resources.

“...”

Western creates memorial bench program

The development office recently created a memorial bench program, and two benches in memory of Dennis Echterling ’86, are in place by one of the campus ponds.

Dennis, who graduated with an electrical engineering technology degree, died in a hiking accident in 2006 at the age of 52. When his brother, Kelly, offered to buy Dennis’ motorcycle, Dennis’ widow, Jerralee, said she wanted to use the money to purchase a memorial for him.

“I wanted to have a memorial in St. Joseph for Dennis’ family and friends to visit. St. Joseph was his hometown,” said Jerralee, who lives in Washington. “When I told him (Kelly) that I wanted to use the money to finance a memorial, he was thrilled. Kelly set to work finding the perfect memorial for Dennis.”

Jerry Pickman ’85, director of development, said the Echterling family wanted a memorial that reflected Dennis’ love of nature, and they suggested a bench by the walking trail on campus. From their suggestion, the memorial bench program was developed. “A memorial bench is the perfect way to leave a lasting memory of a special family member or friend,” Jerry said.

The six-foot benches are made of cedar-colored recycled plastic with black cast iron legs and are bolted on a cement frame. Several locations around campus have been designated as bench locations. The donor may have up to two engraved 2” x 10” bronze plaques placed on the bench.

“It’s nice to have something to remember him by in St. Joseph,” said Kelly.

“I hope other people take advantage of the program. It would be great to have benches all over campus.”

“Dennis was a wanderer and he was adventurous. He was a wonderful husband and father and we always knew how much he loved us,” Jerralee said. “He lived fully and loved deeply.”

Several alumni and community members participated in a President’s Leadership Summit last spring. Pictured, from left, are Stephen Colter ’78, Ron Auxier ’73, Ed Hatley ’62, Al Parcell, chair of the MWSU Foundation Board, and Mike Poland ’72.

From the Alumni Association President

Gregory VerMulm ’89

“Back in Time to ’69.”

This is the theme that our students chose for October’s Homecoming festivities. I cannot wait to see their interpretation of this theme throughout Homecoming week. To some of us, 1969 seems like yesterday; others were not born, but to most of us 1969 was a pivotal year. After all, man walked on the moon and Sesame Street made its debut in 1969. And, oh yes, Missouri Western College moved from downtown to the current campus and began its journey as a four-year college.

This year, the entire Alumni Association board of directors and alumni volunteers from the Junior College, Greek organizations, the Golden Griffon Marching Band, the Baptist Student Union, and former VIPs have been working since April to plan a Homecoming worthy of this milestone in our history.

We start on Wednesday, Oct. 14 with a new event at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art in St. Joseph. Alumni and their guests are invited to join us at our very own wine tasting. Thursday, Oct. 15 is our 27th annual alumni awards banquet. This year, we will honor two Junior College alumni, Charlie ’55, and Patti ’55, Burri, St. Joseph; a graduate from Missouri Western College, Richard Durst ’72, Berea, St. Joseph; a graduate from Missouri Western College, Brent Porlier ’82, Savannah, Mo.; and one faculty member, Frank Thomas, music. Tom Schneider ’64, and the rest of the banquet committee promise a new format and plenty of surprises. On Friday, we will host our first Alumni Association golf tournament, celebrate our junior college heritage as we unveil a plaque at the St. Joseph Junior College building at 10th and Edmond, and hold reunions for Greek organizations, the Golden Griffon Marching Band and former VIPs. Saturday includes the annual parade through downtown St. Joseph, the tailgate and football game and the Baptist Student Union reunion.

Additional plans and surprises are also in the works so don’t miss this year’s Homecoming. “Go Back in Time to ’69!”

Faithful, Proud and True,

Gregory VerMulm ’89
President
Missouri Western Alumni Association

Alumni News

20

Western MAGAZINE

FALL 2009

21
Joe has never forgotten his war experiences. “I can’t talk about the Battle of the Bulge without crying,” he says. And coming upon the concentration camp in Ohrdruf in Germany is seared in his memory. It was the first camp liberated by the Allies, and Joe was one of the liberators. In the 1970s, he began speaking to groups about his Holocaust experiences. He has spoken many times at Central and Lafayette High Schools and to many organizations about his days as a podiatrist, a Broadway actor, a Holocaust liberator and more. And he has always remembered his alma mater, the St. Joseph Junior College, and has been a strong advocate and supporter of the university.

Dr. Joe Friedman '39, sang “The Way We Were” in honor of his table mate’s birthday. “That’s what it’s all about – memories,” Joe said, referring to the first line of the song. “It’s a wonderful song to sing.”

“Joe says most of his memories of his junior college days are of going to class, working at a local drug store until midnight or 1 a.m. some nights and then coming home and doing homework. “The junior college had the bare necessities, but they had a wonderful faculty,” he said.

After graduating from the junior college, he couldn’t afford to continue his education, so he went to work at a local men’s clothing store before enrolling in the Illinois College of Podiatry in September 1941. Three months later, Pearl Harbor was attacked and the United States was at war. Joe finished one year of school before he was drafted into the Army.

He was always involved in local community theatre, he said, but had never given a thought to making a career of acting. However, after a performance of “Four-poster” at the Missouri Theater, he was offered a role with a traveling troupe for the following summer. He decided to give it a try.

Joe has had many amazing experiences, and we are proud that he is one of our alumni,” Colleen said. “We sincerely appreciate his generosity to Western.”

Today, Joe is trying to capture his memories on paper. He is currently working on essays about his first Broadway audition and Joe Droher.

“All we’re left with are memories,” Joe said.

Editor’s note: We will be spotlighting a “Faithful, Proud and True” alumnus/alumna in each issue of the Western Magazine. If you would like to nominate someone for this feature, please email me at holcz@missouriwestern.edu or call 816-271-5651. Nominations will be reviewed by Alumni Services Director Colleen Kowich and me, with preference given to those alumni who regularly and routinely “give back” to Western.
Website launch

“Many people have a lot of questions about planned giving options, the tax code or charitable opportunities,” said Jerry Pickman ’85, director of development. “We wanted to help them by making the information easy to find and read about.”

With that in mind, Western recently unveiled its newest web pages that are full of information about planned giving options – http://missouriwestern.giftplans.

The site will be updated by planned giving experts with easy-to-understand language and diagrams about giving options, as well as donor stories. It also includes an opportunity for users to submit specific information about themselves and receive personalized calculations based on the information they enter.

“We hope this service will be beneficial to our alumni and friends, as they plan their charitable giving options,” Jerry said.

ALUMNI CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 18-19 Hall of Fame Weekend. Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2009 honored at the game Sept. 19 (see p. 9).

September 20 Alumni at Arrowhead Kansas City Chiefs vs. Oakland Raiders, 8:30 a.m. tailgate, $69 game and tailgate.

September 26 Tailgate at Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kan.

October 7 Western Wednesday for St. Joseph-area alumni, 5:30 p.m. Norty’s Bar & Grill, 1117 Frederick Ave.

October 14-17 Homecoming 2009 (see p. 29)

November 7 Second annual Football Reunion, call 816-271-5646 for details.

For more information on events, go to www.griffonalumni.org

Student makes “MADE”

Sometimes, Cliff said, he had to go out of character to be more like a drill sergeant, but pulling off the military type was easy – he has been a member of the Air National Guard for more than five years.

Cliff gave Kristy tips for eating healthy and he developed a high intensity, calorie-burning training schedule for her. Several times a week, the television camera followed them around as he conducted workouts that included running on Western’s track around Spratt Memorial Stadium and swimming in the university’s pool. I was nervous at first having the camera there and sometimes we had to repeat things to get it right,” Cliff said. “My friends sat there and laughed at me.”

The experience wasn’t always easy. As the semester progressed, he became busier with school work and job hunting, Kristy had to repeat things to get it right,” Cliff said. “By the end of the two months, he said Kristy was motivated to continue working out and watching her diet.

Senior Jon Spratt ‘09, can list something that most people couldn’t match – a participant on an MTV reality show. And what an experience it was, he says.

Last spring, the health and exercise science major became a personal trainer for a local high school girl who was featured on MTV’s “MADE,” a reality show that helps teens reach their dreams. Kristy McCallan wanted to be prom queen at Lafayette High School in St. Joseph, Mo., and Cliff had just two months to help her get in shape.

“Anyone in my field would want to do this,” Cliff said. “I love to help people. A lot of people are blind to what they are doing wrong or they don’t know what to do.”

Along with Cliff serving as her personal trainer, Kristy also had a coach from MTV work with her as well. When that coach wasn’t available, Erin Mc- Donald, who graduated in May from Lafayette High School and is now a student at Western, helped out. I got her to open up and meet people,” Erin said.

Cliff had just earned his personal trainer certifica- tion and had started working at Anytime Fitness in St. Joseph about the time MTV made casting calls at the local fitness centers. Since the teen being featured on the show, he had to stay in character.

The experience wasn’t always easy. As the semester progressed, he became busier with school work and job hunting, Kristy had a couple injuries that set her back and they didn’t always see results.

“Until experience,” said Cliff. “My friends sat there and laughed at me.”

The experience wasn’t always easy. As the semester progressed, he became busier with school work and job hunting, Kristy had a couple injuries that set her back and they didn’t always see results.

“Until experience,” said Cliff. “My friends sat there and laughed at me.”

The experience wasn’t always easy. As the semester progressed, he became busier with school work and job hunting, Kristy had a couple injuries that set her back and they didn’t always see results.

“Until experience,” said Cliff. “My friends sat there and laughed at me.”
Chuck Mullican ’08: Dr. Artist

On a summer evening a few years ago, Chuck Mullican was a student, Chuck Mullican ’08, walked out to the Potter Hall parking lot with his professor. When Chuck arrived at his car, the professor told him it was the first time she’d ever seen a student driving a BMW. Chuck just wasn’t your traditional nontraditional student.

For 30 years, he was a successful physician in St. Joseph, including serving as chief medical officer at Heartland Health for 10 years. When he retired in 2003, Chuck decided to pursue his love of art and enrolled as an art major at Western, graduating with a bachelor of fine arts degree in December 2008. “It was a great experience. I don’t think I would have changed a minute of it,” he said. “The teachers were good, the kids were fun, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills was wonderful. I was impressed with the student talent. Some of them really had the eye.”

Sometimes, he said, the wisdom that comes with age and experience came in handy in small group discussions, but he had no advantage over the traditional students in the hands-on studio classes. Chuck said every once in a while his former career would come up in conversations, and students would occasionally ask for medical advice, but most of the time he was just another art student.

And did observing the young students’ eating and sleeping habits make him cringe? Not really. As a father of seven, he said he’d seen his share of unhealthy phases, and as a physician, he’s seen plenty of conflicting medical reports on food and drink. “I’m pretty impressed with the resilience of the human body.”

But one unhealthy habit he observed on campus did bother him. “The only thing I know for sure is that kids should not smoke, and there are a lot of smokers.”

Comparing his experience at Western to his undergraduate years at a small liberal arts college in the middle of Indiana about 40 years ago, Chuck said he was a much more serious student this time around. He also liked that seemed to be more small-group teaching going on this time around.

Chuck’s art work caught the attention of Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Western’s president, who talked to Chuck about acquiring some of it for campus. “I saw his work and wanted to display it for a larger audience,” Dr. Vartabedian said. Chuck donated three of his art pieces to Western, and they are hanging in the atrium of Leah Sprat Hall.

“I’m very proud we’re displaying his art. He is a great artist,” Dr. Vartabedian said. “Chuck’s story is a great story of a man who pursues his passion.”

“If I could do it differently, I would have still been a doctor but I would have taken art in college and then gone to medical school,” Chuck said. “Then I would have had both alongside each other. An education in art prepares you for many more of the different world.”

Chuck Mullican ’08: Dr. Artist
In June, the state of Missouri gave its final approval to an agreement that will bring the annual summer three-week training camp of the Kansas City Chiefs to Western.

Under terms of the agreement, the Chiefs will bring their training camp to Western beginning in 2010. The Chiefs have contributed $10 million for an indoor sports and recreation facility, which will include a full-size football field, a 5,000 sq.-foot locker room, weight room, training room, coaches’ offices, meeting rooms and a lecture hall where the entire team can gather. The facility will be south and west of Spratt Memorial Stadium, where the west softball field currently is. Two outdoor practice fields are part of the project, also.

“This is a transformational moment for our university and our community,” said Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Western’s president. He expressed his appreciation to those who worked on the agreement: Gov. Jay Nixon; State Sen. Charlie Shields; Dirck Clark ’85, then chair of the Board of Governors; Dave Williams, athletic director; and Clark Hunt and Denny Thum of the Chiefs.

The agreement calls for the Chiefs to hold their training camp at Western for a minimum of five years, and in the state of Missouri for a minimum of 10 years.

The city of St. Joseph and Buchanan County are also contributing funds to the project, and Western is raising private donations.

Crossland Construction Co., Inc., was selected as the general contractor for the project, and construction is currently underway.