

THE MAGAZINE OF MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY



SPRING 2019

16 Farewell to Our President

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Thank you!





SPRING 2019

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Drs. Robert and Laurel Vartabedian.
Photo by Eric Callow

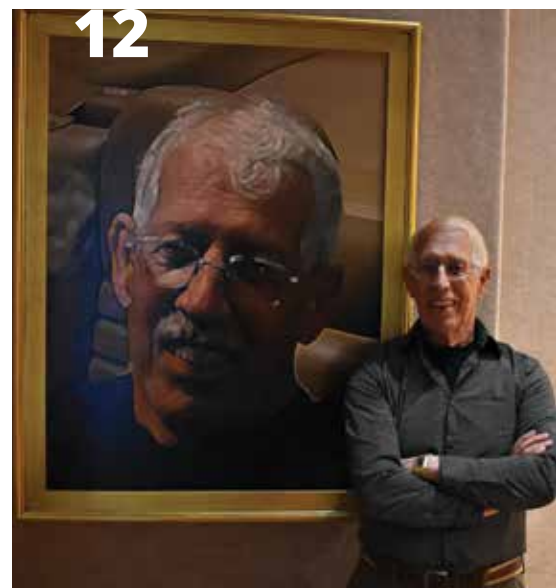
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12 Prints of a Man

An art professor emeritus has donated his large print collection to Missouri Western, and a new gallery has opened to display them.

16 Farewell to Our President: Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian

Dr. Vartabedian, the longest-serving president of a four-year university in Missouri, ends his 11-year tenure June 30, 2019. Take a look back at all he has accomplished during his presidency.



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president's PERSPECTIVE

Dear Friends,

Since I announced my intention to retire on June 30, 2019, this past academic year has been one of "lasts" and fond good-byes. Not surprisingly, it has not been easy.

The past 11 years involved numerous positive experiences. I have enjoyed working with very dedicated faculty and staff, my fellow administrators, board members, alumni, and community members. The list of people I will miss is long.

In my time here, I have been gratified to see students work hard and succeed as they earn their college degrees and find meaningful careers. As president, it was important to me that Missouri Western be a great partner in the community and the region, and I appreciate all the support the University has received from alumni and friends. I have loved my time as president here, and I have been honored to serve.

By far, these have been the most fulfilling years of my long career in higher education. For a first-generation college student like myself to have this kind of capstone career opportunity was a dream come true for me.

Since this is my last letter in the University magazine, I would like to express my gratitude to my family. I have greatly appreciated the support of my son and daughter,

Rob and Sarah. While they have very busy lives in Texas with their own careers and families, they have attended a number of campus special events and have been a constant source of moral support.

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognize my wife, Laurel, who has been steadfastly at

my side throughout our Missouri Western journey. She has embraced our campus family, inviting them into our home, as well as being an indispensable sounding board for me. Additionally, she has been an outstanding campus and community member, giving countless volunteer hours and making a big difference both on and off campus. I will always be indebted to her for the many career sacrifices she has made for me.

Fondly,



Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian
President

Missouri Western State University



Matt Wilson, J.D. hired as president

On March 12, the Board of Governors voted unanimously to name Matthew Wilson, J.D., as Missouri Western's next president. He will succeed Dr. Robert Vartabedian, who will retire July 1 after 11 years.

"With a long track record in higher education, including previous experience as a university

president, Matt Wilson is prepared to serve Missouri Western well," said David Liechti, chair of the Board of Governors. "Under his leadership, Missouri Western will continue to be a crucial part of the economic and cultural vitality of our region."

"I am honored that the Governors have put their faith

in me and incredibly excited to be joining the Missouri Western family," President-Designate

Wilson said. "I look forward to serving and working closely with outstanding MWSU faculty, students, staff and alumni, as well as members of the St. Joseph community."

Wilson is currently a professor of law at the University

of Akron School of Law after serving as president of the University of Akron 2016-18. While president, he helped lead the university to a two-year budgetary turnaround, eliminating a projected \$30 million deficit in 2016-17 and adding \$12 million to reserves. Wilson also participated in fundraising efforts that saw a substantial increase in

donations including a \$20 million student scholarship campaign and the largest single gift in university history. He also oversaw innovative approaches to student recruitment, retention and internationalization.

Prior to serving as president, Wilson was dean of the University of Akron School of Law, where he oversaw a successful \$21 million debt-free renovation and fundraising campaign for the law school facilities and helped achieve a 40 percent increase in new student enrollment over two years. He also served as associate dean of the University of Wyoming College of Law and senior associate dean and general counsel of Temple University Japan. He taught a wide variety of law courses at all three schools. He also served as a visiting professor at three universities in Asia and lectured extensively across the country and world.

He and his wife, Noriko, have four children and four grandchildren. ■



Matt Wilson, J.D. and his wife, Noriko

Pretzel Partnership

Pam Klaus '03, director of the Center for Franchise Development, gets ready to cut the ribbon to celebrate the new name for the center and the partnership with Auntie Anne's Pretzels. Heather Neary, president of Auntie Anne's, is pictured to the left of Klaus in the green dress.



Meacham to speak at Convocation

Presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jon Meacham will be the guest speaker for the 26th annual R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues this fall. His presentation, "The Soul of America: Moving



Jon Meacham

Beyond Division and Hostility," will be at 10 a.m. Sept. 26 in the Looney Complex. Meacham will also be the featured

guest at the annual Convocation luncheon at noon Sept. 26 in the Fulkerson Center.

A contributing editor at TIME, Meacham writes for the magazine's Ideas section. He also pens "The Long View" column in The New York Times Book Review. He served as Newsweek's managing editor from 1998 to 2006 and editor from 2006 to 2010.

His latest No. 1 New York Times bestseller, "The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels," examines the present moment in American politics and life by looking back at critical times in U.S. history when hope overcame division and fear. ■

Vice president resigns

Dr. Cale Fessler, vice president for financial planning and administration, left Missouri Western in February to accept the position of associate vice chancellor of budget and financial planning at the University of Arkansas.

Dr. Fessler came to Missouri Western in January 2013. Under

his financial leadership, Missouri Western managed to make several capital improvements despite relatively flat state appropriations and enrollment.

Dr. Fessler also guided campus building renovations that were funded by House Bill 19. ■

Ceremonial drums lead commencement

Thanks in part to a grant from the MWSU Foundation, the Department of Music purchased two ceremonial drums to lead the faculty members in the spring and fall Commencement ceremonies.

Dr. Joshua Knight, assistant professor of music-percussion, said the rope-tensioned snare drums resemble those used in battles during the Revolutionary War and are still used by military groups today. The drums were painted black and gold

specifically for Missouri Western, so they are one-of-a-kind.

"I knew we could increase the pomp and circumstance with unique, historically accurate instruments,"

Dr. Knight said. "I want them to become a well-known part of our ceremonies." ■



MWSU receives Fletcher gift

The MWSU Foundation recently received a distribution from the estate of Rod '48 and Anne Fletcher, longtime supporters of the University and members of the Clock Tower Society.

The Fletchers established two scholarships in 2004 – the Rod & Anne Fletcher Single Parent Scholarship and the Rod Fletcher Fund for Communication Studies. The recent gift will be added to the single parent scholarship.

Rod started an agricultural advertising company in 1957 when he and his wife, Anne, moved to St. Joseph. In 1965, the company became Fletcher Mayo and eventually had offices in several cities. Rod retired in 1984 as its President and Chairman

of the Board. Anne taught at Everett, Mark Twain and Pershing elementary schools in St. Joseph.

Both Rod and Anne were very involved in St. Joseph organizations, and Anne served on the Foundation Board of Directors. The couple had two sons.

"When Missouri Western became a four-year institution, it was exciting for the entire city," Anne said in an interview in the 1990s. "Everybody wanted the college to succeed and we all worked together to make it happen. We are proud to say we have been associated with the college."

Rod passed away in September 2012 and Anne passed away in June 2018. ■

Chiefs return for year 10

Thanks to a recently signed agreement, the Kansas City Chiefs will return to campus for the 10th year of training camp this summer. The Chiefs have held training camp on campus every year since 2010, when the club returned its training camp to Missouri for the first time in 20 years. At that time, the agreement with the state called for the Chiefs to hold their training camp at Missouri Western for a minimum of five years, and in Missouri for a minimum of 10 years.

“Missouri Western State University has continued to deliver outstanding facilities and services for our annual training camp since we moved back to the state of Missouri prior to the 2010 season,” Chiefs President Mark Donovan said. “The University and the city of St. Joseph provide our team the unique ability to go away for camp, while also offering resources and amenities for fans throughout Chiefs Kingdom to have access to their favorite team.” ■

Opportunity for aspiring chiropractors

Missouri Western students interested in becoming chiropractors can get a jump start on their studies at Palmer College of Chiropractic, thanks to a recent agreement between Missouri Western and Palmer.

Dr. Jason Baker, professor of biology who coordinated the agreement, said Missouri Western students who want to be chiropractors can now earn 90 credit hours in the biology/health science major at Missouri Western, which is approximately three years of coursework. If they meet the GPA criteria, they can then enroll at Palmer, and the first year of Palmer curriculum coursework will be transferred back to Missouri Western to complete the student's bachelor's degree.

Dr. Baker said he had wanted to pursue an agreement with a chiropractic college for a long time, and selected Palmer because of its reputation as a premier chiropractic college. It has three locations – Davenport, Iowa; Port Orange, Florida and San Jose, California – and students can select which Palmer campus they wish to attend. Additionally, they can apply for

a scholarship if they attend the Davenport location.

“It's a great opportunity for students,” Dr. Baker said. “This is another way to help students achieve their goals.”

Ali Stevens, from Savannah, Missouri, said she has wanted to be a chiropractor since she was in middle school, and plans to transfer to Missouri Western this coming fall so she can take advantage of the agreement. “I am so excited,” she said. “It's a great jumpstart into my career.” Since the agreement includes all three of the Palmer campuses, she hopes to earn her degree at the Florida location and is visiting there this month.

Missouri Western already has agreements with four universities in the health professional field: an early matriculation agreement with Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences, an early acceptance agreement with the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, an early admission agreement with University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine and a pre-admission agreement with the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine Bryant Scholars Program. ■

New online job portal

A new online job portal named Handshake went online this past spring for Missouri Western students and potential employers. It replaces the Griffons4Hire system. Handshake will give students and alumni access to job postings both



on campus and at companies across the country, increasing Missouri Western's reach to over 300,000 employers.

Employers may create an account and post openings on Handshake, through which Missouri Western students can

review and find positions to apply to. The postings will include part-time positions on campus through the Student Employment Program, or full-time careers around the world.

For more information, visit missouriwestern.edu/careerdevelopment. ■

Campus Kudos

The Master of Science in Nursing program recently received a 10-year reaccreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Music student **Matthew Bobela** received the Mayors Distinguished Citizen Award at the annual Mayors Thanksgiving Dinner at the St. Joseph Civic Arena last fall. He received the award in recognition of his music service for area Catholic churches.

“Eclipse,” a film collaboration of students and faculty that was shot over the summer of 2018, was selected for screening at the Fault Line Film Festival at Southeast Missouri State University and the Kansas City FilmFest International. **Jeff Stover**, assistant professor of cinema and department chair, served as executive producer and was an actor. **Thomas Brecheisen**, assistant professor of theatre, completed post-production and was the visual effects and editing supervisor.

Dr. Judy Grimes, associate vice president and dean of students, was awarded the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Region IV-W AVP/Senior Level Professional Award for her service at Missouri Western.

Dr. Gary Clapp, associate professor of chemistry, received the 2018 E. Ann Nalley Regional Award for Volunteer Service to the American Chemical Society. The award recognizes the volunteer efforts of those who have contributed significantly to the goals and objectives of the ACS through their regional activities.

Claudia Baer, student employment coordinator, was re-appointed to the national board of directors for the National Student Employment Association. While attending its annual conference in Milwaukee last fall, Baer earned her Student Employment Essentials National Trainer Credentials. She was also presented with two national awards at the conference, the 2018 Jim Campbell Rookie of the Year Award and the 2018 President's Innovation Award.

The Center for Entrepreneurship, directed by **Annette Weeks '78**, reached a milestone this past fall – it served its 500th business. A February 2019 report shows 537 businesses, representing 221 jobs created, 108 jobs retained and 47 new businesses. The center opened in the fall of 2014.

Capt. Clint L. Dickerson, assistant professor of military science, has been selected to Major in the Military Police Corps.

Winners in the Graduate School's 3 Minute Thesis Competition were **Jenna Anderson**, first place; **Mariah Maudlin**, second; and **Phoebe Pyrtle**, third.

Dr. Cary Chevalier, professor of biology, received the E. Sydney Stephens Award at the Missouri Natural Resource Conference. The annual award is the highest honor presented by the Missouri chapter of The Wildlife Society to one of its members who has developed, applied, administered or completed an especially significant program of management, education, research, or communication that results in an outstanding contribution to the wildlife resources of Missouri.

Four students, **Mazzie Boyd**, **Austen Hall**, **Engoma Fataki** and **Michala Pulliam**, were invited to attend the 2019 Missouri Governor's Student Leadership Forum on Faith and Values for three days in Jefferson City. The forum included the Governor's Prayer Breakfast.

The 2019 Drum Major for Justice Award recipients include student **Eugenia Wallace**, employee **Dr. Kay Siebler**, professor of English; and community member **Kimberly Warren '92**, CEO and founder of MidCity Excellence. ■

Dr. Nolen Morrison remembered

A plaque and photo to recognize the devoted service of Missouri Western's first vice president of Student Affairs was recently hung in Blum Union 222.

In 1967, Dr. Nolen B. Morrison was the first person hired by Dr. M.O. Looney, who was president of what was then Missouri Western Junior College. Dr. Morrison's first position was head of Academic Affairs, and five years later, he was named Vice President of Student Affairs. He was serving in that role when he passed away in December 1983 at the age of 54.

Dr. Looney, who was a lifelong friend of Dr. Morrison, called him a valuable member of his team who was willing to do whatever was asked of him. That team worked tirelessly in the development of the four-year college and the construction of the new campus.

"He was honest and a hard worker," Dr. Looney said. "He was a great member of our team, and he worked wherever he was needed."

As Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Morrison was responsible for the areas of Admissions and Records, Registrar's Office, Housing, Financial Aid, Health Services, Dean of Students, Counseling and Testing, Placement and Off-Campus Services, and Traffic and Safety. Students from his tenure may remember that he was the one who read their names as they crossed the stage at the Commencement ceremony.



Dr. Nolen Morrison

Dr. Morrison, a native of Gainesville, Missouri, spent his entire career in education. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, he earned bachelor's degrees in biology and health, physical education and recreation from Southwest Missouri State University (now Missouri State University) and he began his teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse in Gainesville. Dr. Morrison went on to become a driver's education teacher, basketball coach and high school principal, serving as principal of Gainesville High School for eight years. He earned master's and doctorate degrees in education administration from the University of Arkansas before joining the

Missouri Western administration in 1967.

Dr. Morrison's son, Brad, remembers his father as being very involved in campus life and "extremely student-oriented. He was always helping students reach their goals." But Brad said his father never wanted to be in the limelight and always remained in the background.

"He was a very patient, Christian man with a lot of Southern hospitality. He was always looking for ways to help, even if you were a stranger."

He said his father had a great love of the outdoors and was an avid hunter and fisherman. Brad was seven years old when his father was hired at Missouri Western, so he feels like he grew up on campus.

"I remember Chris (Looney) and I swam in the pool a lot. Chris and I would chase chipmunks all the way over from his house (which was on campus) to the pool."

Dr. Morrison battled and beat lymphoma twice, and had been in remission for about five years by 1983. On December 10 of that year, he was driving over to one of his favorite hunting grounds near Kirksville, Missouri when he passed away.

At the time of his passing, he was survived by his wife, Melva, three children, Dan, Brad and Michelle; and a granddaughter.

"He spent his whole life helping students achieve their dreams," Brad said. ■



John Cox



Dave Takes



Ken Gerber '65



Ed Roberts



Ralph Alvarez '71

The amazing mace

A negative was turned into an amazing positive when the local St. Joseph Woodworkers Guild agreed to create a new ceremonial mace for Missouri Western this spring.

The original mace, provided by a gift from Joe Friedman '39, was carried in and placed on the stage at Commencement and other University ceremonies. It was stolen in May 2018. When University personnel tried to find a replacement, they realized that very few companies made them, so Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Missouri Western's president, asked Dave Takes, owner of Expressions Engraved, if he knew of any companies.

But Takes had a better idea. He asked the St. Joseph Woodworkers Guild if they would create a new one for the University, and they were more than happy to oblige.

"We always like to help people out, and do different things that challenge us," said Ed Roberts, president of the guild. "It was something we had never done before."

"It's really exciting. When they said they wanted a mace, I was all over it. It was something I wanted to do," guild member John Cox said.

The guild designed the new mace, and Roberts and Cox spent many hours on the project with Ken Gerber '65, Ralph Alvarez '71 and Richard Tolbert. The mace, made with local walnut, is approximately

3' tall and is decorated with brass and ebony rings. Four gold medallions, provided by Takes, are on each side at the top.

"It's just beautiful," Takes said. "It's a piece of furniture and a piece of art. It's well built and it's something that's going to be a part of the University for many, many years."

When guild members saw the stand for the original mace, they decided they wanted to replace it with one customized for the new mace. The new one, made with walnut and spalted hackberry, is decorated with brass strips and a medallion.

It shouldn't be a surprise that the Guild was willing to create a new mace for Missouri Western. With more than 450 members, the Guild has served the community for more than 22 years by crafting

beautiful items that they donate to Toys for Tots, Camp Quality, the AFL-CIO and the Noyes Home for Children.

The new mace was used for the first time at the spring Commencement ceremony. ■



Engoma Fataki: Embracing opportunities

Missouri Western wasn't on Engoma Fataki's radar as a choice for college, but when he came for a visit and saw a video that featured the University's tagline, "Everything is possible," he knew this was the place for him.

"That got my attention," Fataki said. "All I wanted to do was to make an impossibility possible. That was my dream."

See, Fataki didn't have what most people would consider a normal childhood. The oldest of nine children, Fataki was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and lived in refugee camps in four different African countries until he came to the United States at the age of 19. He thought he would have limited opportunities, because that was all he had ever known.

Fataki arrived on campus in fall 2016, ready to embrace university life and learn as much as he could, and find out for himself if everything really was possible.

His childhood experiences led him to choose two majors – political science and international studies – and a minor in peace and conflict studies. Even as a child, Fataki realized that the actions of leaders is what led to refugees being forced to leave their homelands. He wants to be a leader in the United Nations or the federal government and change that.

Since coming to Missouri Western, he has found the opportunities as he had hoped.



Student Engoma Fataki holds a sample of the soccer ball made of plastic bags that he and his friends used when he was growing up in African refugee camps. Fataki hopes to raise money to send soccer balls to those camps so the children can play with the real thing.

After his freshman year, Fataki spent two months of the summer of 2017 as an intern for a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., meeting with members of Congress and advocating for refugees and immigrants.

"Because I spent my childhood as a refugee, I was trapped in the mindset of thinking I had no opportunities. But the internship helped remove that mindset," he said.

When he was a sophomore, he attended the national student leadership forum in Washington, D.C. that coincided with the National Prayer Breakfast. He also attended the Missouri Governor's Student Leadership Conference in Jefferson City two different years.

And last fall, he was nominated by the International Relations Council in Kansas City and selected

as one of only 25 students from around the country to attend the World Affairs Councils of America's national conference in Washington, D.C. Fataki met several diplomats and ambassadors from around the world and United States political figures to discuss the United States' foreign trade policy issues and the country's role in the world.

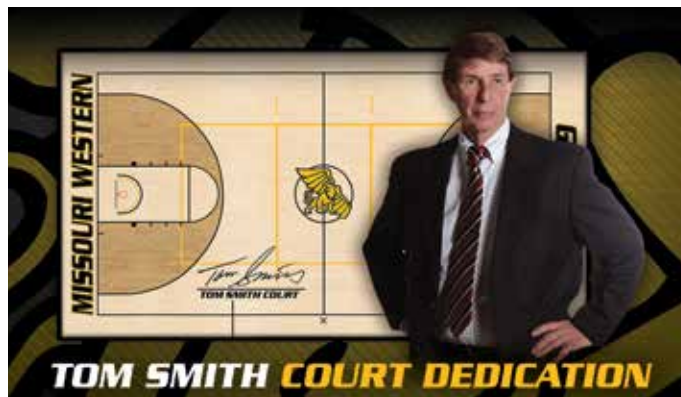
This past March, he was elected president of the Student Government Association for 2019-20.

"No matter your differences, as long as you work hard, there is a possibility to succeed," he said. "At Missouri Western, I have been given the chance to embrace opportunities. And I don't think I would have had those opportunities at other places." ■

Court named for Tom Smith

The playing surface in the fieldhouse was named Tom Smith Court after the Hall of Fame men's basketball coach in February.

Smith served as head coach of the Griffons from 1988-2013, retiring as the winningest head men's basketball coach in MIAA history with 519 wins as an MIAA coach and 618 total coaching victories. In 25 seasons at Missouri Western, he went 448-279 with a 241-181 mark in MIAA games.



Smith won five regular season MIAA championships and four MIAA postseason championships, including leading Missouri

Western to a sweep of both association titles in Missouri Western's inaugural season in the MIAA, 1989-90.

During Smith's tenure, Missouri Western qualified for the NCAA Division II Regional Championships 11 times. He was named MIAA Coach of the Year twice at Missouri Western and once at Central Missouri and coached 51 All-MIAA selections, six All-Region picks and three NCAA All-Americans. ■

Football players score safer helmets

Griffon football recently purchased VICIS ZERO1 helmets, which were the highest rated helmets in 2018 NFL and NFLPA testing, and top-rated Riddell and Schutt helmet models.

Funded exclusively by a private donation, the investment will allow all members of the 2019 Griffon football team to have two helmets

— one black and one white - that meet the top-performance standards from recent studies by the NFL and Virginia Tech.

The ratings in the NFL study were based on the helmets' ability to reduce head impact severity measures in laboratory testing. Test conditions were intended to represent potentially concussive

head impacts in the NFL. Several Griffons wore VICIS helmets during the 2018 season and were impressed with the performance and comfort of the helmets.

The 2019 season will be the 50th season of Missouri Western football. The anniversary will be celebrated throughout the season, and will include uniform selections featuring the new helmets. ■

Coach Edmisson resigns

Head Women's Basketball Coach Rob Edmisson resigned in March.

"After serious consideration, thought and prayer, I have decided to step down from my position as head coach at Missouri Western," Edmisson said. "I believe at this time it is best for Missouri Western to find a new leader who can build on the success we have brought back to this program. My family has tremendously enjoyed St. Joseph and the support of this community

during our time at Missouri Western and we wish nothing but the best for this program, department and University in the future."

Edmisson led the program for seven seasons, compiling a 118-86 record at Missouri Western. Under his leadership, the Griffons won the 2016 MIAA Regular Season Championship and set an MIAA record with 20 conference wins that season. The 2015-16 Griffons also reached the NCAA Division II Central Region Championships.

Nineteen student athletes received All-MIAA distinction under Edmisson's tutelage, including 2016 MIAA Player of the Year LaQuinta Jefferson. The Griffons reached the postseason in six of Edmisson's seven years, reaching the MIAA Championship quarterfinals all six times and the semifinals twice.

In 23 seasons as a collegiate head coach, Edmisson compiled 520 wins and a .728 winning percentage. ■

Sports wrap

Year one of the Sundance Wicks era brought an exciting glimpse of a promising future for **men's basketball**. The team doubled its win total from the previous season, finishing 12-18 with a 6-13 record in the MIAA. Seven road wins by the team were the most for the program in 17 years. Wicks also led the program to its highest scoring average since the 2013-14 season. All of that was accomplished even by playing in one of the most challenging schedules in the nation.

The team graduated just three seniors and will add a handful of incoming freshmen to redshirt freshmen who spent this season practicing with the team.

Head Coach Rob Edmisson remained unblemished in the first round of the MIAA



Championships as he led the **women's basketball** team to the quarterfinals of the conference tournament once again. The season ended there with a loss to top-

seeded Fort Hays State. The Griffons ended the year with a 14-16 overall record and an 8-11 mark in MIAA play.

Junior Katrina Roenfeldt put together a fantastic season, breaking the program record for three-point field goals made in a season with 86. Roenfeldt was named first team All-MIAA after

leading the conference in three-point field goal percentage, three-point field goals per game and finishing third in the conference, averaging 16.2 points per game. She also led the team with 5.2 rebounds per game.

The **indoor track and field program** re-wrote the still-fresh record book this winter under first-year head coach Yuriy Litvinski. The Griffons broke nearly every indoor track and field record in the book and did most of it early in the year.

Sophomore Hanna Williams became the first in school history to earn an automatic qualification to the NCAA Division II National Championships. Williams earned her way to nationals in the 400-meter, but unfortunately was not able to compete due to an injury suffered at the MIAA Championships. The young men's and women's teams showed a lot of promise with numerous NCAA Division II provisional marks and individual championships throughout the season. ■



Hanna Williams, above; Katrina Roenfeldt, top photo

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Prints

Dr. William Eickhorst, professor emeritus of art, was studying at Parsons School of Design in New York in the early 1960s when a friend in his printmaking class gave him one of his pieces. That print became the first acquisition in what was to become a collection of more than 1,000 prints. Last fall, nearly six decades later, Dr. Eickhorst and his wife, Edith, donated that collection to the Missouri Western State University Foundation. It will be housed in a newly created gallery on the second floor of Spratt Hall.

Amanda Morrow, University curator, said the collection includes a wide variety of work mostly from 20th and 21st century artists. It will be stored on campus and pieces will be rotated in the gallery on a regular basis. She and Eric Fuson, artist-in-residence, designed the gallery and storage space.

"We are so lucky to have the collection for the students and the community," Morrow said. "It will be very educational."



Edie and Bill Eickhorst

The collection also includes a small library of monographs of artists, printmaking history and printmaking technique that will be available to students.

Dr. Eickhorst taught in the Department of Art at Missouri Western for 28 years, serving 15 years as department chair and teaching Art Theory and Criticism, The Business Aspects of Art, Art Education Methods, and Art Appreciation. He retired in 2006 and is an adjunct art instructor at Park University.

The entire collection was moved from Dr. Eickhorst's home to campus this past spring, and Morrow and a student intern are busy inventorying and cataloguing the collection, which involves gathering and recording information about each print.

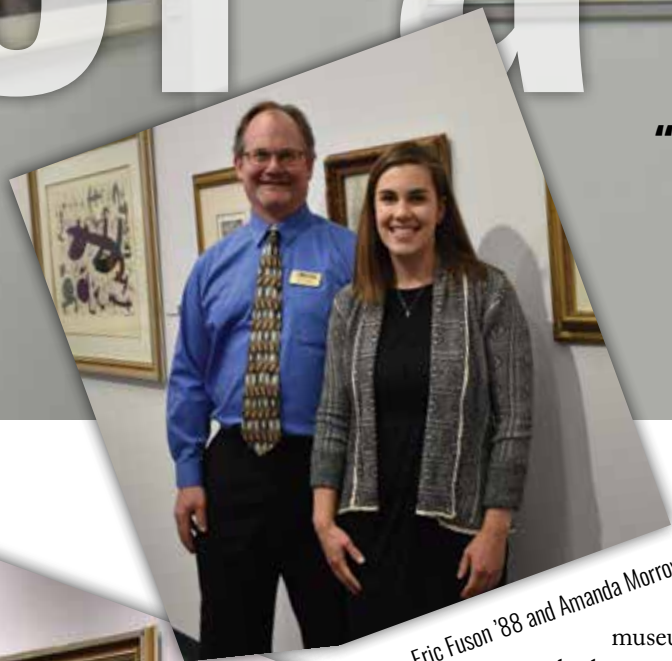
"The collection is stellar," Morrow said. "It is so exciting to have access to it."

About 20 years after Dr. Eickhorst acquired his first print, he formed a print consortium of printmaking artists across the country with the goals of advocating for

of a man

"We are so lucky to have the collection for the students and the community. It will be very educational. The collection is stellar, It is so exciting to have access to it."

- Amanda Morrow, University curator



Eric Fuson '88 and Amanda Morrow

printmakers and getting more prints viewed in exhibits. Cost to join the consortium? One print.

Over the next 25 years, Dr. Eickhorst took the prints he acquired through the consortium, matted and framed them, organized them and arranged the works to be exhibited at museums and universities, usually with 30-35 artists in each. At its peak, the consortium had about 300 members from the United States and nine foreign countries.

"The consortium was doing something positive for artists and printmaking as an endeavor," he said. "We were getting prints by artists exhibited and seen."

For many of those years, the consortium generated a profit from renting out the exhibits, and those funds were used to purchase prints at auctions. That was how Dr. Eickhorst acquired prints from Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri Matisse and Paul Cézanne, among others, for his collection.

"I'm always asked, 'What's my favorite?' That's like asking you which of your children is your favorite," Dr. Eickhorst said. "I love them all for different reasons."

A native of Hackensack, New Jersey and a U.S. Army veteran, Dr. Eickhorst graduated from Parsons with a degree in graphic design and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in art education from Montclair State University in New Jersey. At the time he graduated with his master's degree, he held the distinction of being the only student

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in the history of the Art Department to both write a master's thesis and have a thesis exhibition. He earned his doctorate in art education from Ball State University in Indiana.

That was where he met Edith. They have been married 47 years and have two children.

Throughout his career, he had 15 solo exhibitions, work included in six international juried exhibitions, 61 national and regional juried exhibitions and over 100 group shows.

Dr. Eickhorst said he had four goals when he thought about gifting his collection: 1) keep it intact, don't split it up, 2) keep it in the Kansas City/St. Joseph area, 3) exhibit the prints, and 4) make it available to printmakers and scholars for study.

"Missouri Western matched perfectly with all four goals, as well as demonstrating a strong commitment to the fine and performing arts and a desire to make the arts more readily available to the community," he said. "I think I made a wise choice!" ■

Several pieces from sculptor Brent Collins will also be displayed in the Spratt Hall gallery. Collins, who created two sculptures for Remington Hall, announced in 2014 that he intended to permanently loan his works to Missouri Western, and the University has acquired several of his pieces since then.



Kathy Liao: Professor of painting and printmaking

When Assistant Professor of Art Kathy Liao was close to graduating from the University of Washington in Seattle with a neuropsychology degree and applying for medical school, she found she was having trouble writing a personal statement about why she wanted to be a doctor. That, she said,

was what helped her realize that she was on the wrong career path.

"I always loved to paint and draw, and I was always drawing a lot of sketches," she said. "But I figured I would always do it on the side."

But after that pivotal moment, Liao, a native of Taipei, Taiwan, earned her neuropsychology degree and then earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting and Drawing from the University of Washington. A Master of Fine Arts in Painting from Boston University followed, and she served as an instructor of art at both University of Washington and Boston University before joining the Missouri Western staff in 2014 to teach painting and printmaking.

"The more I teach, the more I love it," Liao said. "I'm

passionate about it and I enjoy sharing my expertise with students. I want to help them continue to grow."

Her goal is for her students to have successful, sustainable art careers, and as a means to that end, she started an artist-entrepreneur speaker series at Missouri Western so her students can meet and network with others in the art field.

Liao says she enjoys teaching the students the technique of the craft and encouraging the students to think creatively to solve problems. Her science background often shows through, she said, because she is always "playing and experimenting."

She is excited about the recent gift of the print collection of Dr. William Eickhorst, professor emeritus of art, to Missouri Western. "As a printmaker, I am all the more

impressed with the collection, which as a whole, culminates to an unmatched survey and record of contemporary printmaking of the highest caliber," Liao said. "It is such an incredible resource, for the students to witness the vastness and the endless possibilities of printmaking, the lineage and the continued relevancy of printmaking over the years."

It wasn't until graduate school that Liao learned the art of printmaking, and she found that she really enjoyed it. "Printmaking forces you to think about an image in a totally different way. It has helped me re-examine the way I paint and allowed me to execute my ideas very differently. My work changed quite a bit since I started printmaking."

Three years ago, she received a one-year residency through the Charlotte Street Foundation Studio Residency Fellowship in Kansas City, Missouri, and last year, she was selected for a three-year StudiosINC Residency Fellowship in Kansas City. That fellowship comes with a large studio space in the Crossroads District, allowing her to create larger pieces than she has in the past.

Her goal is to work in the studio about 15-16 hours a week, and she carves the time out around her teaching schedule on campus. Some days it means being in the Kansas City studio by 7 a.m. before her afternoon classes, and working there most weekends. Summers are her opportunity to enjoy hobbies like hiking, camping and baking.

Liao has exhibited her works in exhibitions all over the country. She was also featured in a Hello Atelier! podcast, where she talked about what it means to be a working artist.

And "working" is the operative word for Liao, as she handles the roles of painter, printmaker and professor. "I just wish there was more of me to give to the students." ■

Farewell to our president:

Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian

On June 30, 2019, an era will end for Missouri Western when President Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian retires after 11 years at the University's helm. Missouri Western was his first college presidency, culminating a stellar career of almost four decades in higher education.

"Dr. Vartabedian led with the best interests of the students as the most important thing," said Dr. Mark Laney, CEO of Mosaic Life Care. "His concern for them always came through."

Dr. Vartabedian began his Missouri Western career on July 1, 2008, and a look around campus quickly reveals a tangible legacy of construction, renovations and remodeling. Building projects during his term include the new Griffon Indoor Sports Complex, Griffon Hall residence hall, Remington Hall, the Spring Sports Complex and Kelley Commons student gathering space; and renovations of Agenstein Hall, Spratt Memorial Stadium, the Looney Complex arena and the Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool. Dr. Vartabedian also oversaw the creation of the Walter Cronkite Memorial and its three live, multimedia shows.

His efforts to enhance the campus aesthetic is another of his legacies. Dr. Vartabedian guided the campus beautification efforts of planting of more trees, installing fountains in three ponds, adding gold accents to the clock tower and securing new outdoor sculptures.

But David Liechti, chair of the Board of Governors, notes that there is more to Dr. Vartabedian's legacy than the tangible sites on campus.



I think the intangible of gaining the trust of many people within our community is a great accomplishment. It's his attitude and his professionalism in his role as president that have brought community members together to want to support the University.

He will truly be missed.

- David Liechti, Chair,
Board of Governors

"You can always look at buildings and facilities, and those have been major improvements while Dr. Vartabedian has been here," Liechti said. "But I think the intangible of gaining the trust of many people within our community is a great accomplishment. It's his attitude and his professionalism in his role as president that have brought community members together to want to support the University. He will truly be missed."

Under the guidance of Dr. Vartabedian, the University launched a successful Centennial Capital Campaign in 2015 with an initial celebration goal of \$20 million. Also

during his presidency, the Missouri Western State University Foundation endowment nearly tripled since 2009, from approximately \$12.5 million to more than \$34 million.

The University also engaged in a comprehensive master planning initiative that studied every building and Missouri Western's entire 723 acres during Dr. Vartabedian's tenure. He also established the School of Fine Arts in 2013 and the School of Nursing and Health Professions in 2016.

But Dr. Vartabedian is quick to deflect the credit for his accomplishments. "The accomplishments were team efforts," he said. "The real work has been done by the dedicated people of this University – the faculty, staff, students and alumni who take such great pride in being Griffons, and our many community partners who have made our work possible."

He believes the R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues, which marked its 25th year in 2018, is a real point of pride for Missouri Western.

"Bob has always supported the Convocation, and as we know, according to the Washington Speakers Bureau, it's now regarded among the best college speaker series in the country," Dan Boulware said. "And I think Bob deserves a lot of credit for that."

Prior to joining Missouri Western, he served as vice president for academic affairs at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico. Dr. Vartabedian's career also included time as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina and a department head and director of

graduate studies in communication at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. e served seven years as a faculty member and administrator at Wichita State University.

"I'm a proud MWSU graduate and am grateful for the unprecedented significant accomplishments under Dr. Bob Vartabedian's leadership," Wayne Chatham '90 said. "This humble man with his tremendous management qualities will be dearly missed by his staff, students, peers, the

community and friends, and they can be confident that the MWSU successes will continue because of the Dr. Vartabedian legacy."

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In his own words

Remembered for

I want to be remembered as someone who tried to treat people decently and someone who gave it his best. Hopefully most people felt like they were treated well. I like Maya Angelou's quote: 'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.'

Most proud of

The positive outcomes for all academic accreditations is at the top of my list.

Biggest challenges

There were two: one was the financial picture – particularly regarding state appropriations. The second was related to the first, that is, the challenges of keeping good personnel.

Favorite duties

I have a lot of fond memories. Ribbon cuttings were always exciting. I think my favorites are all those activities that transport people to a positive circumstance from day-to-day conflicts, like music performances, theatre productions, athletics events and student presentations.

Favorite spots on campus

The Remington atrium is one of my favorites. I also love standing by The Next 100 Years ..., the sculpture. Standing in the Stadium Club is the best place to look at the great stadium facilities. And, any spot on campus where I can see the clock tower is nice.

Miss the most

I will greatly miss the people. There have been some wonderful people that I have had the privilege of working with.

Worth mentioning

We have three facilities on campus named for legendary people: the Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool, The Bill Snyder Pavilion and the Walter Cronkite Memorial. It's neat that we have those spaces recognizing people who deserve to be honored.





WALTER CRONKITE MEMORIAL



Top left, Dr. Vartabedian with Chip and Nancy Cronkite in New York City; top right, Dan and Dale Boulware and Drs. Laurel and Bob Vartabedian with Martin Luther King III, the guest speaker at the R. Dan Boulware Convocation on Critical Issues. Bottom right, the three men in the center are the actors in the Walter Cronkite Memorial's three multimedia shows – Ken Remmert (Harry S. Truman), Jim Korinke (Cronkite) and Walter Coppage (Martin Luther King, Jr.). The photo was taken when the three shows were performed at Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri.

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New Facilities and Upgrades

Agenstein-Remington Hall

The ground was broken on the Agenstein and Remington halls project shortly before Dr. Vartabedian arrived, but he oversaw the complete renovation of Agenstein Hall and the construction of Remington Hall, which house the biology, chemistry, computer science, math and physics departments. Remington opened in 2010 and Agenstein reopened in 2011.

Baker Family Fitness Center

The Baker Family Fitness Center was extensively remodeled in 2012 to create a large multipurpose room, an expanded cardio area, new restrooms and a larger reception area. The public locker rooms were refurbished, and a locker room was built for the women's soccer team. In 2018, locker rooms were added for the cross country, and track and field teams.

Campus Beautification

Dr. Vartabedian launched an effort to enhance the beauty of the campus, adding fountains in three ponds, almost 200 evergreen trees and more outdoor sculptures. A permanent entrance sign was added at the Faraon Street entrance, and beautiful signs were erected in front of each building. Gold accents were also added to the Glenn E. Marion Memorial Clock Tower in 2015.



Griffon Indoor Sports Complex

The Griffon Indoor Sports Complex was built in 2010 to accommodate the Kansas City Chiefs training camp. The facility includes an indoor football field, a strength and conditioning center, locker rooms, athletic trainer facilities, offices and classrooms.

Griffon Hall

Griffon Hall, an apartment-style building for sophomores, juniors and seniors opened for fall 2011. Each apartment contains four bedrooms and two bathrooms, a kitchen and a shared living room.

Kelley Commons

Kelley Commons, an outdoor gathering space for students, opened in 2013. Kelley Commons is adjacent to the Blum Union and contains tables and chairs and a stage area.

Looney Complex Arena

The Looney Complex Arena received all new bleachers and seating and a total makeover of paint and graphics in 2018. In February 2019, the court was renamed Tom Smith Court, after Missouri Western's longtime head men's basketball coach.

Potter Hall

In 2014, an addition was built on to the south side of Potter Hall, home of the School of Fine Arts, to house the percussion studio. That addition replaced a modular unit that had been used since 2000. Also in 2014, new restrooms were built and a circle drive was added.

Thanks to Missouri House Bill 19 in 2015, the University received \$4.8 million in capital improvement funding from the state. Potter Hall and several other campus buildings received updated ceilings and carpeting in common areas, and HVAC improvements.



Griffon Hall residence hall

Spratt Memorial Stadium

Spratt Memorial Stadium underwent a complete renovation and reopened in 2016. The renovation included a new three-story building with a Stadium Club, suites, a banquet room, coaches rooms, a media center, offices and a Victory Plaza. A massive video scoreboard was also part of the project, and the Bill Snyder Pavilion was added in 2018.

Spring Sports Complex

With the opening of the Spring Sports Complex in 2011, the baseball team played on campus for the first time in its history. The complex boasts a softball field and a baseball field with bleachers, concession stands and press boxes.

Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool

Missouri Western's indoor pool was completely renovated and reopened in 2016. The shared costs of construction and ongoing operation and maintenance of the pool were the result of a partnership between the University, Buchanan County, the City of St. Joseph, the St. Joseph School District and the YMCA.

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Above, Dr. Vartabedian and benefactor Steven L. Craig; below, the ribbon cutting for the Bill Snyder Pavilion.



Outstanding Achievements

Academic Accreditations

In Dr. Vartabedian's entire time at Missouri Western, the University and all academic program accreditation outcomes were successful. In 2010, the Craig School of Business became accredited by the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, and maintained its accreditation in 2016.

"That is just not found at other institutions," Dr. Vartabedian said. "The entire campus deserves credit for that; everyone contributed to the solid academic progress."

Stellar Athletics

Griffon athletic programs have won numerous conference championships and competed in national tournaments. Student athletes recently established the highest overall GPA in the athletic department's history. Throughout Dr. Vartabedian's tenure, several athletic facilities were built or renovated and six new sports programs were established.

Strong Community Partner

Throughout his presidency, developing a good relationship with the community was one of Dr. Vartabedian's goals, and the University has numerous partnerships with businesses and organizations throughout the community and the region. Dr. Vartabedian said he was especially grateful for the coalition that was formed to save the Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool.

Another outstanding coalition helped bring the Kansas City Chiefs summer training camp to Missouri Western in 2010. The camp, which will return for its 10th year this summer, has attracted nearly 350,000 visitors to the campus and community.

"Dr. Vartabedian learned early on that the president's role went above and beyond the students, faculty and staff on campus, and he became engaged in many community organizations from the outset," said Steve Johnston, Missouri Western director of External Relations and former director of the Community Alliance of St. Joseph. "The Community Alliance of St. Joseph, which promotes a shared vision for St. Joseph, captured his attention and he never turned back. President Vartabedian recognized that for the community to move forward, we must all be working together. His leadership and collaborative spirit will be missed!"

Eickhorst and Collins Art Collections

Sculptor Brent Collins was commissioned to create one indoor and one outdoor sculpture for Remington Hall, which opened in 2010. In 2014, he announced that he intended to permanently loan the University his entire artist's estate.

In 2018, Dr. William Eickhorst, professor emeritus of art, and his wife, Edith, donated a print collection with approximately 1,100 limited edition prints to the University.

"I have been very impressed with the president and what he has done in the fine arts," Dr. Eickhorst said.

Entrepreneurial Focus

The establishment of an innovative entrepreneurship partnership with benefactor Steven L. Craig has provided a unique business opportunity for alumni. Since 2009, 30 graduates of the Center for Franchise Development have purchased more than 40 stores across the country.

"Not only did Dr. Vartabedian support the franchise program every step of the way, he took it upon himself to go to Durango and meet with the owners of the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory," Craig said. "That shows his level of commitment. He was actively involved and wanted to make a difference."

Since Craig's gift in 2008 to establish the Craig School of Business and an entrepreneurial focus, the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Center for Franchise Development have been established, along with an entrepreneurship minor.

International Students

One of Dr. Vartabedian's first priorities when he arrived was to increase the number of international students on campus. In the fall of 2008, Dr. Vartabedian's first semester on campus, there were seven international students enrolled. In the fall of 2018, there were 94 students from more than 30 countries. That number has been as high as 130 in recent semesters.

President Vartabedian recognized that for the community to move forward, we must all be working together. His leadership and collaborative spirit will be missed!

- Steve Johnston, Missouri Western director of External Relations and former director of the Community Alliance of St. Joseph

In others' words

He supported me when I had my first internship on Capitol Hill, and he's been with me all along the ride. Dr. Vartabedian has been a great mentor. He's very professional and always has great positivity.

Paul Granberry III
Student Governor, Board of Governors

Bob Vartabedian is a very special man, and St. Joseph and Missouri Western have been so fortunate to have him as one of our leaders. He will leave a wonderful legacy for all of us to try our best to live up to.

Dr. Mark Laney
CEO, Mosaic Life Care
Co-Chair, Centennial Capital Campaign

Bob, through his leadership and vision, has continued the legacy of building the University into a highly respected and well recognized institution of higher learning in the state. His dedication to the University, its students and the St. Joseph community will leave a lasting impression of his tenure at Missouri Western.

Patt Lilly
President, St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce

In my time at Missouri Western I had the privilege of getting to work with Dr. Vartabedian on several projects. He was always there when I needed to bounce ideas or concerns about what the students wanted, and he also helped debrief me on things learned in meetings. I considered him a mentor. I am the person I am today due to the example he set for me.

Brian Shewell
Former Student Governor

Dr. Vartabedian understands athletics. He has done a good job of 'marrying' the athletic side of things with the student side, and made athletics an important part of Missouri Western. That has not always been an easy role. He is going to be very difficult to replace.

Zack Workman '74
President, Gold Coat Club



Mentor

Online Courses

Increasing the number of online courses was another of Dr. Vartabedian's goals. He guided several initiatives to create new online courses, and today, some degrees can be earned 100 percent online. In fall 2008, there were 661 enrollments in online courses; by fall of 2018, there were 3,959, an almost 600 percent increase.

Walter Cronkite Memorial

Dr. Vartabedian's vision led to the creation of the Walter Cronkite Memorial in Spratt Hall in 2013. The approximately 6,000 sq. ft. display includes three live, multi-media shows and hundreds of one-of-a-kind artifacts from the life and career of Walter Cronkite. The Cronkite family has loaned the University many items that are on display in the Memorial. There is also a replica of Cronkite's 1960s news studio and several interactive displays.

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Saying good-bye to a university president comes with the unfortunate task of also saying good-bye to their spouse, and so it is with great sadness that the University and community bid Dr. Laurel Vartabedian a fond farewell, as well.

Laurel, a communication professor, had a 30-year career in higher education (beginning at Wichita State University) before joining her husband at Missouri Western. That, he said, made her “an indispensable sounding board for me.”

He said he also appreciated her role in hosting many, many events for University and community groups in their home.

“Laurel has been a wonderful member of the community,” said Dave Liechti, chair of the Board of Governors. “She has volunteered and been engaged in many things. She and Dr. Vartabedian have made a great team.”

Laurel immediately embraced the arts community on campus and in St. Joseph, joining the Performing Arts Association Board shortly after she arrived, serving on that board for a total of six years.

“When Laurel saw a need, she immediately started working with other community leaders to fix the issue,” said Teresa Fankhauser ’79, executive director of the Allied Arts Council.

Another example happened when Missouri Western brought Melissa Manchester to the Missouri Theater. “During that performance, Laurel and other community leaders realized a new sound system, a renovated green room, and dressing rooms were needed to improve the audience’s experience and make it a more comfortable space for the artists. Through their efforts, led by Dr. Jim and Carol Roever, the Missouri Theater now boasts a half-million dollar renovation.”

On campus, Laurel and community members Karen Graves and Bill Wright founded the Missouri Western Arts Society, which gives arts supporters an opportunity to invest in the University’s arts programs. She continues to be active in that group today.

“Laurel has graciously shared her talents and time in support of the arts and has been a pillar of the Arts Society since its inception,” said Patti Long, development officer. “Her perpetual dedication has been a great gift to fine arts at Missouri Western and the community.”

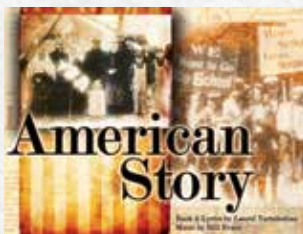
Shortly after she arrived on campus, with the assistance of the faculty members, Jo Anne Grey and others, she resurrected the Department of Music’s Madrigal Feasts of the 1970s and 1980s with the Lights and Tights Renaissance Feast, drawing music and theatre together for a great evening of entertainment. Additionally, she served on the campus’s outdoor projects committee.

Laurel also wrote a musical, “Mother Divine,” that was performed on campus in the summer of 2014 for the Western Playhouse.

That same year, she accompanied a group of students to Trinidad, Colorado for a performance of “American Story,” a musical retelling of the 1914 Ludlow Massacre that she wrote. After that performance, the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Governor’s Commission invited Missouri Western to return the next year to perform “American Story” to mark the 100th anniversary of the massacre.

In 2013, she won the Mayors Awards for the Arts in the artist category for “American Story” and “Mother Divine.” Both of these musicals were competitively selected for extended performances in New York City at off-Broadway venues.

“Dr. Laurel Vartabedian has had such a positive impact on our community and her presence will be felt for years to come,” Fankhauser said. ■



From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

After a winning season for our football team, we thought we had enjoyed our last game. A short time later, we received great news that the Griffons had been invited to a postseason bowl game. We made the trip on Dec. 1 to Texarkana, Arkansas to the "Agent Barry Live United Bowl." It was a great weekend. The tailgate barbeque was terrific and best of all, we won the game! Thanks to all who made the trip.

I also enjoyed attending the 2019 Martin Luther King, Jr. banquet in January. Thanks to Latoya Muhammad for a fine evening, and congratulations to those receiving the Drum Major for Justice Awards this year.

Congratulations to Tom Smith on the dedication of the Tom Smith Court in the Looney fieldhouse in February. We thank you for your dedication to Missouri Western.

As you can see, there is always something going on at Missouri Western! Several alumni events were held in the spring and planned for summer, including Future Griffs at the Chocolate Factory and Griffons Untapped at the new River Bluff Brewing in St. Joseph. There are many other events in the works, so stay tuned. This is shaping up to be a great year to be a Griffon!



James Jeffers '73

As you may know, Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Missouri Western's president, is retiring in June. Thank you, Dr. Vartabedian for a great 11 years. You have been a tremendous asset to our alumni and we wish you well in your retirement.

Finally, it's hard to believe my year is coming to a close soon. I want to thank a few people who made my year a success: Colleen Kowich, director of Alumni Relations, Diane Holtz, magazine editor, and Alicia Otto, who is a silent hero on our alumni team.

I want to remind everyone to come out and support your Missouri Western. Come to a game, a show, take a class, or just walk across the beautiful campus. I'll be here and I hope to see you!

Again, I welcome your feedback and/or involvement in the Alumni Association. Please reach out to me personally if you like at (816) 390-1605 or jimjeffers25@gmail.com.

With Griffon Pride,

James D. Jeffers '73
President, Alumni Association

Calling Alumni volunteers!

From regional chapters to affinity networks, the Missouri Western Alumni Association seeks to engage alumni and help them develop or enhance their professional and social networks.

Alumni are encouraged to register with Handshake®, the Career Development Center's online jobs portal, attend or help plan a chapter or networking activity or participate in one of the many campus career fairs.

For more information on Association volunteer activities, and to find out how to participate, contact Colleen Kowich, director of Alumni Relations, (816) 271-5650 or ckowich@missouriwestern.edu. ■

Attention, all former SGA, CAB, WAC, and RHA members!

Mark your calendars for Homecoming October 11-12, 2019! Kendell Misemer '81, Shelby Coxon '99, Luke Gorham '06 and Natalie (Bailey) Newville '08 are planning a reunion just for you! They are looking for fellow SGA alumni to serve on either the planning committee or are willing to contact others. If you are interested in helping or if you have questions, please contact Colleen Kowich, director of Alumni Relations, at ckowich@missouriwestern.edu or call (816) 271-5650. ■

Bob '72 and Connie '72 Wollenman: Faithful, proud and true

As a child, Bob Wollenman often played in an old barn south of Mitchell Avenue, never dreaming that someday St. Joseph would get a four-year college with a large campus that included that barn.

But that's just what happened. Bob and his wife, Connie, both started college at the St. Joseph Junior College downtown and moved to Missouri Western's new campus when it opened in the fall of 1969. They graduated with bachelor's degrees in 1972, have had successful careers, raised three children, and have been great supporters of Missouri Western all along the way.

Bob's family owned several service stations and had a fuel distribution business, so he worked in the family business while earning his marketing degree. In the summer of 1969, he was working a shift at a station in Rushville, Missouri when Connie came in, and after she left, he told his co-worker that he wanted to date her. They were married in 1971.

After graduation, Bob continued to work the family business until 1997 when he went out on his own. One of the properties he took over at the time was the Deluxe Truck Stop in the stockyards area in southside St. Joseph.

Bob said in the late 1990s, the south end was at a low ebb economically, but was beginning to "reinvent itself."

So he reinvented his business by offering more and more services to local industries. Today,



Bob '72 and Connie '72 Wollenman

the business offers exterior truck washing and interior tank wash outs for kosher and food grade, livestock, hoppers, refrigerated trucks, and inedible tanks, along with passenger and light truck and truck tire centers. They wash about 130 vehicles per day.

"We've been blessed. St. Joseph has been good to us," Connie said.

Bob said he also feels blessed and thankful for their customers who have become friends. "They are truly the investors in Deluxe Truck Stop's success," he says.

Connie, from the Rushville area, graduated with a degree in medical technology. She worked mainly in that field throughout her career, and retired from Children's Mercy in Kansas City, Missouri in 2013.

Her long hours and commute while raising a family never gave

her an opportunity to join community organizations, so when she retired, Connie took advantage of her extra time to get involved. One of the groups she joined was the MWSU Ambassadors Board, and Deluxe Truck Stop is a Hall of Fame sponsor of the group's Night at the Ritz every year. She has also been involved in several other community organizations, including a member of the Noyes Home for Children's Board.

Along with several community organization's boards, Bob serves on the Craig School of Business and Technology's Advisory Council and the MWSU Foundation Board of Directors, and spent this spring semester serving on the search committee for the new University president. In 2017, Bob was named Entrepreneur of the Year by Missouri Western's Center for Entrepreneurship. He is also currently the chair of the board for NATSO, a national organization which represents travel plaza and truck stop owners and operators.

The Wollenmans also established the Connie Griffith Wollenman Scientist Scholarship Fund, an endowed scholarship to support students who need financial assistance.

"I think being a member of the St. Joseph community and now having the time and financial resources, it is our Christian path to give back to the community," Bob said. "And Missouri Western is a big part of that community." ■

Alum invests in “Tide pods” of health industry

It all started when Austin Wilcox of Kansas City, Missouri was doing his laundry one day. He threw a Tide POD® in his washing machine and went upstairs to make a protein drink. He accidentally spilled the powder and made quite a mess in his kitchen.

That was when he thought to himself, why doesn't somebody make a pod for protein drinks? That thought was immediately followed by, why don't I?

So he called Wondabeka Ashenafi to pitch the pod idea. Wilcox and Ashenafi, friends for about four years, had been working together on a different idea for a business, and Isaac Collins '11, a fellow church member and owner of two Yogurtini® stores in Kansas City, Missouri, was advising them.

Ashenafi and Collins liked the pod possibilities, and the three formed SERV Nutrition about two years ago to develop the idea. Last November, they launched the company's first product – a whey protein powder in a 100 percent food-grade pod that readily dissolves in liquid.

Collins, who graduated with both management and marketing degrees from Missouri Western, said the pre-measured pod addresses and solves the problems with current protein powders – they often come in large containers, they can be messy, it's easy to improperly measure the powder and the container is not really environmentally friendly. It's also inconvenient to take on the go, and he says their pod is “all about convenience.”

Developing a health-related product was important to the three because all three played college



Wondabeka Ashenafi, Austin Wilcox and Isaac Collins '11 recently launched their company, SERV Nutrition, that produces protein powder pods.

sports and continue to stay active. But it was also essential that the company have a service component.

“This is the most important part for us,” Collins said. “We wanted to build a company that would outlast us. Because of my faith, if the company is not about service, I don't want to do it.”

So they teamed up with Feed My Starving Children, a nonprofit that created MannaPacks that offer nutrition to children overseas. With every SERV Nutrition purchase, the company purchases a MannaPack that is shipped to children in Uganda.

“We wanted to create a successful business, but it's not successful if it's not helping people,” Wilcox said.

“It just makes sense to do the right thing,” Ashenafi added.

Collins, who played football for the Griffons, purchased a Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in 2012 as part of Missouri Western's franchise development program. He ran the store in Williamsburg, Iowa for four years before he sold it

in 2016 and bought the two frozen yogurt stores in Kansas City.

“Even as a kid, I knew I always wanted to be my own boss, but I figured I'd be an owner around age 30 or 35,” Collins said. “Missouri Western got me kick started, and I was an owner at age 23. That program literally changed my life.”

SERV Nutrition is currently operating out of a warehouse in the West Bottoms district in Kansas City, and Wilcox said they have enough space for friends to use it for work, as well. Their pods are for sale in stores around Kansas City and St. Joseph, and online sales (servnutrition.com) are booming, he said.

“We're ecstatic about where we are with the business, I couldn't have imagined a better launch,” Wilcox said.

The three are working with a lab to develop more products, such as a vegan blend, meal replacement and more flavors, and they want to see the company grow, one healthy pod at a time. ■

Student Regents/Governors: Where are they now?

R. J. Claassen II '87

**B.S. in Chemistry
Baytown, Texas**

1st Student Regent 1985-86

(The term changed to two years in 1986)

**What was the last book
you read?**

"Astrophysics for People in a Hurry," by Neil deGrasse Tyson, a recommendation from my son. I think he is hoping I'll pick up on some of the lingo ...

What is your favorite app?

TripCase, it organizes travel info and integrates with airlines to give you updates on flight changes, etc.

What is your favorite movie?

"Top Gun," followed closely by "Apollo 13."

**What would your
autobiography be called?**

Can't believe anyone would waste their time writing about me, including me. How about, "Things I Still Have to Do."

**What do you like to do
in your spare time?**

I enjoy spending time with my family and working in the yard.

Q. What is your current job title and what are your duties?

A. I am the Global Operations and Baytown Technology and Engineering Center Site Manager for ExxonMobil Chemical, and I'm responsible for managing all of the operations for our technology centers. In Operations we provide support for the research efforts spanning from technicians that work in the laboratories to the construction and operation of pilot plants. We have four technology centers, Baytown (suburb of Houston); Brussels, Belgium; Bangalore, India; and Shanghai, China that

provide support for all aspects of research and development for ExxonMobil Chemical, including new process and product development, application development for our products and customer support.

Q. Talk about your student experience at Missouri Western.

A. I had lot of fun at Missouri Western. I had the chance to be involved in various activities that strengthened both my academic knowledge as well as my leadership skills. As a chemistry major I spent a lot of time in the chemistry department and in labs. We had a solid faculty team that really cared about their students and a very active Alchemist Club. We had a lot of fun and worked pretty hard too. Missouri Western gave me a great education and set me up to succeed in my graduate work and in life.

Q. How did Missouri Western prepare you for your career?

A. Missouri Western gave me a solid base that prepared me well for graduate school. I worked with professors that were excited about teaching and worked hard to connect with the students. They also brought in a lot of practical, real-life examples that helped us see how what we were studying connected with the real world.

Q. Talk about your experience as a student regent/governor; what stands out?

A. It was a great experience. I had been involved in student government as a student senator since my freshman year, and it was a chance for me to gain a lot of understanding about how things run and what goes into managing a college. All of the regents were great to work with and were happy to share their knowledge and experience. Dr. Janet Murphy was the president at the time, and the college was really beginning to grow.

Q. Talk about your family.

A. I have been married to Emily for 30 years, and we have three children: Caroline, who graduated from Texas Tech in Lubbock and is in the Occupational Therapy Graduate Program at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas; Rob, who is studying physics and astronomy at the University of Texas at Austin; and Ellen, who is in high school.

If you are a former Student Regent or Student Governor, contact Diane Holtz at holtz@missouriwestern.edu to be a part of this series! ■

Kevin Puckett '15: Attorney, president and CEO

Thanks to his high school dual credit courses from Missouri Western and a tremendous drive, Kevin Puckett '15 graduated from Missouri Western in May 2015, went on to law school, graduated in December 2017, passed his Missouri Bar exam in April 2018 and became the youngest-ever lawyer in the state at age 23. He is currently a partner at Puckett Law Firm, P.C. in Cameron, Mo. where he practices with his mother and his brother.

"I arrived at Missouri Western with an outrageous goal – I wanted to graduate in two years," Puckett said. "The great thing about my advisor, Suzanne Kissock, is that she never treated my goal as outrageous." In fact, she encouraged Puckett to consider an even more outrageous goal – with Missouri Western's early acceptance program to University of Missouri-Kansas City's law school, why not push for one-and-a-half years? So he did.

Puckett, who practices criminal and family law, says he loves almost every aspect of his job and he wants to help as many people as he can. He believes the United States has a "substantial access-to-justice issue," and often, an attorney is a person's last (or only) line of defense.

But apparently, one career isn't enough for him. When Puckett was in his first year of law school, he started a full-service digital marketing firm, On The Top Search, and today serves as its president and CEO. On The Top Search currently has 10 employees and offices in Kansas City,



Kevin Puckett '15, right, and Justin Turner '18. Puckett is president and CEO of On the Top Search, and Turner is vice president.

Missouri; Cameron, Missouri; and Omaha, Nebraska.

He said growing a business while in law school put him a step ahead of his cohort, because business skills aren't taught in law school, and many of his law-school classmates didn't realize the amount of business skills needed to run a private practice.

And how does he keep up with both his law practice and marketing business? The attorney/president and CEO keeps a meticulous schedule that includes everything from appointments to meditation to workouts. If it isn't on the schedule, it won't get done.

Puckett says he "exercises his brain" every day by listening to podcasts. His go-to list includes The Model Health Show, The GaryVee Audio Experience, Tim Ferriss Show (also his favorite

author) and the Waking Up Podcast. His secret to having time to listen to so many podcasts? Sort out the episodes that are irrelevant, and play the relevant ones at two-times speed.

Puckett, always goal-driven, plans to grow On The Top Search while he continues to practice law, and political aspirations aren't out of the question.

But he has another goal, maybe his most outrageous goal of all – breaking the stereotype that millennials are lazy and don't care about anything. He says millennials just don't care about things that are without purpose. Once they find their purpose, they pour their heart and soul into it.

Pretty sure Puckett would know. ■

Savanna Daniels '16: No limits

When it came time to decide on a college, Savanna (Law) Daniels '16 had to look further than the graphic design programs she was interested in. She lost her hearing when she was 18 months old because of a hereditary condition (her father and her sister are also deaf), and she wanted to make sure the college she chose was willing to work with her.

"Missouri Western assured me they could provide services that would give me equal access in the classroom," she said. "And they did."

All her classrooms were wired so she could connect her computer to receive Real Time Captioning Service to transcribe the lectures. If she missed anything, the notes would be on her computer screen, and she said that was a huge help.

Daniels graduated with a graphic design degree and was hired before graduation as a graphic designer and marketing coordinator for the Kansas City Ballet.

Last year, she created the promotional design looks for Septime Webre's world premiere of "The Wizard of Oz" in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, and her wicked witch design was on the cover of KC Studio Magazine.

She also developed the creative concepts for the 2019-20 season and is working on a "new look and feel" for the Kansas City Ballet's annual performance of "The Nutcracker."

"Being deaf has its challenges for sure but it also has its

advantages," Daniels said. "It gives me the drive and motivation to work hard and to succeed in everything that I do. It has also

taught me to advocate for myself to be given the same opportunities as everyone else. I'm constantly striving to prove that I can do anything a hearing person can, except hear."

She gives her parents credit for her success as well. "My parents wanted me to have every opportunity available to me, so from a very early age I was put in

speech therapy, taught to read lips, learned sign language and worked with a teacher of the deaf to develop my language skills until I graduated high school," she said. "If it hadn't been for my parents and my teacher, Deb Sparks, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Daniels says she loves working in the performing arts industry and plans to keep learning, growing and changing. The field of graphic design, she says, is always evolving, and she loves the challenge of coming up with new concepts and ideas.

"I want my story to be about the fact that even though I have a disadvantage with my hearing loss, if you work hard, you can accomplish anything you set your mind to," Daniels says. "Missouri Western exemplifies the fact that everything is possible, because they gave me the tools I needed in order to achieve my goals." ■

"I want my story to be about the fact that even though I have a disadvantage with my hearing loss, if you work hard, you can accomplish anything you set your mind to. Missouri Western exemplifies the fact that everything is possible, because they gave me the tools I needed in order to achieve my goals."

- Savanna Daniels '16



1970s

Dr. Ronald Hestand '71 has a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology from Northwest Missouri State University, a Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy, an Ed.D in Counseling Psychology. He received ordination as a Religious Science Practitioner and as a Religious Science Minister. He taught psychology, sociology, and related subjects at South Florida Community College and was awarded Outstanding Instructor, and spent nearly 40 years as a forensic and prison psychologist. He received a Who's Who's Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. Hestand founded the Quantum Healing Center for Positive Spiritual Living (Facebook page is Quantum Healing). He also published a book, "Neurotheology and Quantum Physics Prove Unity Principles Work," and is now writing a second and expanded edition of that book. He is a certified hypnotherapist and a certified Law of Attraction life coach. While working at the Okeechobee Correctional Institution, he designed a Sex Offender Treatment program that was subsequently adopted by several other Florida prisons.

James Sheehan '78 was promoted to executive vice president and chief financial officer at Hormel Foods Corporation.

1980s

Tracy Streeter '85 joined Burns & McDonnell, providing consulting and project development support for water resource agencies and municipalities. Prior to joining Burns & McDonnell, Streeter served 33 years in positions related to Kansas water resource management. He retired as director of the Kansas Water Office in December 2018.

Pat Modlin '88 joined the Commerce Bank Board of Directors. Modlin retired from Cerner and owns and operates Bottleage Investments and Felix Street Gourmet in St. Joseph, Missouri.

2000s

Rebecca (Becca) Stallard '01 co-wrote a feature-length movie with Jason Hudson and Joe Brennon, "Christmas at the Chateau." A premiere was held at the Missouri Theatre in St. Joseph, Missouri, in December. It is a modern-day Christmas movie filmed at the Shakespeare Chateau, Cafe Brioche, and the downtown library, all in St. Joseph.



Melissa Fowler '06/'14/'16, center, received the Kansas City Region 2018 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award for Public Health/Ambulatory Care in November 2018. Fowler, with the University of Kansas Health Systems, is pictured with Dr. Rachel Pepper '03 and Jaime Bartley '17.

Elijah Haahr '05 was named Speaker of the Missouri House of Representatives for the 2019 legislative session. According to the National Conference on State Legislators, Haahr is the youngest Speaker in the country at 36 years old. He will also be the first speaker in state history from Springfield. Haahr was elected to the Missouri House in 2012, and has served the past two years as the Speaker Pro Tem.

LeeAnn (Schuster) Fall '06/'09 and her husband, Drew, announce the birth of a son, Hudson Robert, born in October 2018.

2010s

Becky Wiederholt '13 graduated from Park University with her MBA with a concentration in Human Resources Management. She is a member of the Missouri Association of Workforce Development and the Society for Human Resource Management.

Future Griifs at the Chocolate Factory



The annual Future Griifs at the Chocolate Factory event at the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in St. Joseph was a success again this year. The event, which includes story time and chocolate dipping, is so popular, two sessions were held on Presidents Day.

In Memoriam

We remember those who have passed away. If you want to include someone in this listing, please call (816) 271-5651, mail the information to Diane Holtz, Missouri Western State University, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507, or email holtz@missouriwestern.edu.

Cheryl A. Bonderer '84, Winston, Missouri, Jan. 2, 2019.

Kelsey F. Cartledge '17, Stafford, Virginia (formerly of St. Joseph, Missouri), Feb. 17, 2019.

Frank D. Connett Jr. '42, St. Joseph, Missouri, Nov. 6, 2018. Connett was named a Distinguished Alumni in 1985.

William S. Cordonier III '55, Kansas City, Missouri, Oct. 26, 2018.

Randy Cottell '84, Jefferson City, Missouri (formerly of Grant City, Missouri), Oct. 6, 2018.

Karol Crouch '78, Lenexa, Kansas, Jan. 10, 2018.

Frederic T. Farmer '90, St. Joseph, Missouri, Dec. 10, 2018.

George H. Ferbert JC, St. Joseph, Missouri, Dec. 18, 2018.

Sohn Gilbert '02, St. Joseph, Missouri, Dec. 5, 2018.

Edward F. "Sonny" Golden III '72, Mooreville, Indiana, April 18, 2018.

Joan (Stuppy) Hughes '72, Faucett, Missouri, Jan. 15, 2019.

Nancy Kuntz, St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 6, 2019. Kuntz worked as a secretary at Missouri Western from 1972-1993.

Paige E. Lollar '12, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 8, 2019.

Harold C. Mooney '81, St. Joseph, Missouri, Oct. 9, 2018.

R. S. "Casey" Meyers, St. Joseph, Missouri, Nov. 24, 2018. Meyers had served as president of Missouri Western's Board of Trustees.

Tara E. Norman '06, Chillicothe, Missouri, Jan. 10, 2019.

James D. Partridge '02, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 1, 2019.

Tim J. Pollard '00, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 4, 2019.

Lionel Ramlatchman '00, St. Joseph, Missouri, Oct. 29, 2018.

Dr. Imogene A. Rigdon, Sarasota, Florida, Jan. 3, 2019. With her sisters, Dr. Rigdon recently established the Mary Bryne Stewart Graduate Nursing Scholarship at Missouri Western.

Barbara J. Rinehart '85, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 2, 2019.

Monica A. (Mace) Sapp '99, Weatherby, Missouri, Nov. 16, 2018.

Marvin R. Stilgenbauer '53, Kansas City, Missouri (formerly of Lenexa, Kansas), Jan. 12, 2019.

David Stouffer, St. Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 16, 2019. Stouffer taught mathematics at Missouri Western from 2005 to 2014.

Obal "Junior" Vincent, Faucett, Missouri, Nov. 23, 2018. He was a groundskeeper for Missouri Western for 23 years before retiring in 1995. ■

Your memories wanted!

From the editor: This fall marks the 50th anniversary of Missouri Western's campus and the start of the four-year college. I plan to write a feature about the physical campus and its growth, and I would love any stories you have about its buildings and facilities, construction, etc. I want to hear from alumni from all the decades! If you have any memories to share, email me at holtz@missouriwestern.edu, call me at (816) 271-5651, or mail me information at MWSU Magazine, 4525 Downs Drive, Spratt 108, St. Joseph, MO 64507. Thank you! ■



Caption this!

Submit your creative entry to holtz@missouriwestern.edu or mail to Diane Holtz, MWSU, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507 by May 31, 2019. Our panel of judges will select a winner, and we will notify you and announce the winner in the Fall 2019 issue. Good luck!



The winner of our Winter 2019
caption contest is
**Dave Carlile: "It's never easy cleaning
the Griffon's cage."**



And here are some great honorable mentions:

"That's one heck of a spider problem." Steven Bryson '99

"This doesn't look anything like the picture on the IKEA box!"
Lance Foster '88

"Finally with this legal, we can start selling this stuff." and
"Don't light a match ... or the entire campus will be high."
Mac Andrew '66

"And why is the carpet all wet, Todd?!" Erica Williams

"There must be a pony in here, somewhere!" Creath Thorne

"What The Hay?!?" Carol Meyers

"There has to be a beaver in here somewhere."
Robert A. Powell '00

"We are looking for a needle in the Mo West haystack!"
Nancy Gray '91

***And now I'm curious! Can anyone tell me what
was really happening in this photo?***



Missouri Western State University
4525 Downs Drive
St. Joseph, Missouri 64507

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What a winter!

