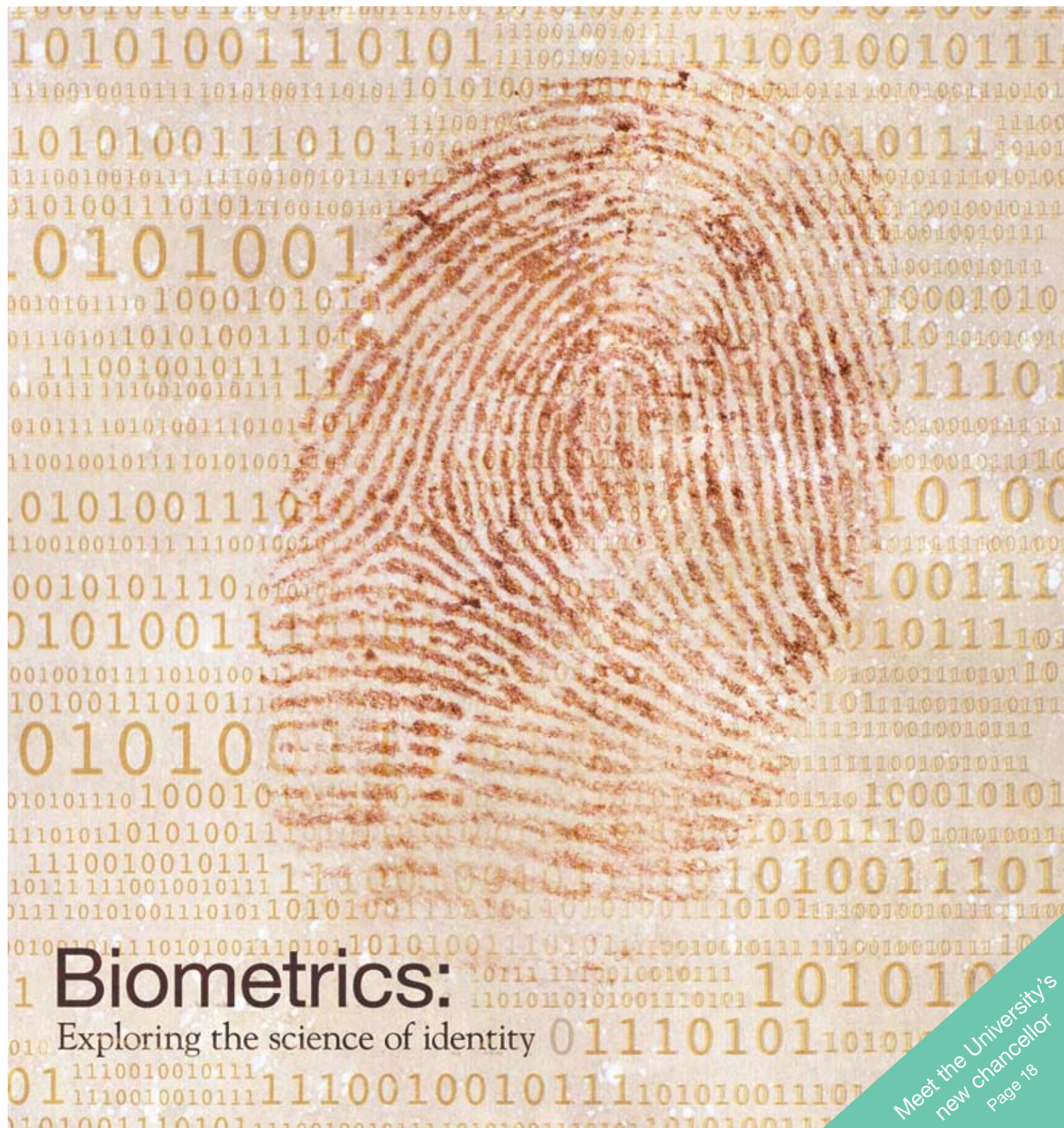


PERSPECTIVES

News Magazine of the University of Missouri-Kansas City



Biometrics:

Exploring the science of identity

Meet the University's
new chancellor
Page 18

Stay connected

Do you remember the professor who changed your life?

Two things keep alumni connected to their alma maters, according to national studies. One is a continued relationship with faculty. The other is regular communication.

With *Perspectives*, we strive to offer both. A small team of writers, designers and editors works on the magazine throughout the year. Though we publish *Perspectives* twice a year for all UMKC alumni and friends, more often than not, we're at work on the next issue before the current one goes to press.

Aside from the national data, we know from our reader surveys and feedback that our alumni like getting a printed magazine that keeps them updated about their alma mater, fellow alumni and campus news. *Perspectives* is the only UMKC publication that goes to every alumnus and donor, and we're committed to communicating with our alumni and sharing their news.

As we were putting the finishing touches on this spring's issue, we were faced with some difficult decisions – like many of our readers. It was clear the economic situation would mean a mid-year budget cut for UMKC as the state of Missouri dealt with a severe revenue shortfall. Like most colleges and universities, UMKC is grappling with shrinking budgets and endowment levels.

So you might have noticed that this issue is smaller than those in the past – half the size, to be exact. We've also dropped the plastic polybag around the magazine as both a cost-cutting and an environmental decision.

Where are the other 24 pages? Well, the good news is we worked to revamp our magazine Web site this past fall, so you'll find all our stories, campus news, class notes and other extras on the Web site. There is also a feature that allows you to comment and chat about the stories, share them with others or post them to your Facebook or MySpace pages. While you are online, be sure to update your alumni information and your e-mail address so we can add you to our electronic newsletter mailing list and send e-mail updates from your school or college.

As always, we welcome your feedback on anything from content, stories you'd like to see, even creative ways to communicate in tight times. We're proud of our alumni and the difference they are making in the world, and we will continue to keep you connected to the great things happening at UMKC.

You'll find some stories in this issue about the lifelong impact faculty have on their students (don't miss *Miss Lofthus'* scholars on p. 16). We hope you will recall – and perhaps reconnect with – the faculty member who pushed you, encouraged you and helped make you who you are. Enjoy.



LISEN TAMMEUS

Read expanded stories online when you see this graphic:

PERSPECTIVES.UMKC.EDU

In remembrance

Perspectives is saddened to report the death last September of alumna Rosemary Bichage. The Kenyan native, who survived the 1998 bombing of the United States Embassy in Nairobi, inspired people around her and touched the hearts of *Perspectives* readers, who read her moving story in the spring '08 issue. Bichage had stomach cancer.



Perspectives magazine is published twice each year for alumni and friends of the University of Missouri-Kansas City by University Advancement.

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an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution

The meaning of green

Expert advice on everything from green thumbs to greenbacks

Help for greenhorns

For recent grads, being new on a job can be daunting. Your long-term career success can depend upon how well you do during your first year in the work world, so the initial impression you make counts. There's no such thing as a "do-over."

The qualities employers look for in employees include great communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills, as well as adaptability and a positive attitude. These are all areas in which you can shine and make a good first impression. Although your first job out of college may not be your dream job, it could lead to greater things if you adopt the right attitude and keep your expectations realistic.

Good listening skills are a way to learn as much as you can about your new environment in order to make intelligent suggestions and/or have your ideas accepted. Learn about the "culture" of the organization so you'll fit in and better understand the politics of your new employer.

It's your responsibility to make the first year successful – not your boss's or your colleagues'. While it's hard being the new kid on the block, try to accept the newcomer role with confidence.

Candice Stice (B.A. '93, M.A. '00)
Director, UMKC Career Services Center



Looking after your greenbacks

The present global financial crisis may be unique in how it occurred, but what you should do with your money has already been worked out. There is no point in looking for an investment secret or magical mutual fund that will fix everything. Now is the time for each of us to have a personal and meaningful conversation about finances. Take emotion out of financial planning, and these guidelines will save taxes and preserve your assets for the future.

Firstly and most importantly: Live within your means. In general, Americans, when we anticipate making \$100, gladly spend \$130 only to be upset later. This has to stop – it's unsustainable, so change your thinking now.

Secondly, quit treating your money like it's all in one pot – mentally divide your money into short-term and into long-term holdings. The long-term money must be off limits no matter how badly you want something today.

Thirdly, your long-term money should be diversified, asset-allocated and suitably invested. This is too complicated to do on your own – seek the services of a qualified financial adviser who fully understands life insurance and investments.

Finally, don't take risks with all of your money. It's important to have some safe money along with riskier, invested funds.

Ralph E. Harold (M.D. '83)
Financial adviser

Use your green thumb

When it rains, a lot of water doesn't get utilized – it just runs straight off into the storm drains. Planting a rain garden, like the three we have created on the UMKC campus, will not only prevent water waste but will also help stop pollutants from rain water entering the water supply.

Rain gardens should be planted in a depression in the land, or at the base of a slope in your yard, so they will retain the rainfall. Till the land to loosen it up – hard ground is less able to absorb water – and choose perennial plants with long roots to help break up the soil. Place the plants that can best withstand wet feet at the center of the depression and hardier plants that can deal with dry conditions further out of the center. Ask at your local garden center or visit www.rainkc.com for advice on which plants to use.

Another good water conservation tip is to position a rain barrel under your house's gutters so that water can be used on your plants.

Steve Jenks
UMKC Grounds Maintenance Supervisor

Read more Life 101 advice online.

PERSPECTIVES.UMKC.EDU



Biometrics: The science of identity

From passports to ATM codes, technology is changing how we live

by LINDSEY V. COREY

Reza Derakhshani is a real people person.

He's the kind of stranger you hope sits next to you at an airport bar. Chances are he'll talk about his bunny, Beavis, his journey from the Middle East to the middle of America and even the hospital that handed over bags of fingers to him.

"I never thought I'd be working with dead bodies as an electrical engineering major," says Derakhshani, Ph.D., a UMKC School of Computing and Engineering assistant professor of electrical engineering and computer science. "But every time I went to the hospital, they handed over a bag of fingers."

"When I tell people what I do, that part makes a good story over some beer," he laughs.

Derakhshani's occupation takes a bit of careful explaining. But he's patient and passionate.

"The hallmark of a good scientist is to be able to simplify complex things without losing the gist of the matter," he says. "Being in the engineering field, you need an application for the theory. That's how I pay the bills."

Much of Derakhshani's work involves biometrics research funded by the National Science Foundation's Center for Identification Technologies Research. The gist?

"Biometrics identifies people based on unique traits," he says. "Fingerprinting is biometrics, and it's been around for thousands of years."

Derakhshani's introduction to biometrics began unexpectedly with a bag of fingers. As a graduate student at West Virginia University, his adviser suggested Derakhshani try to develop a system that could differentiate between fingerprints that came from living or deceased people.

"This project was weird," he says, "but I went for it. A light bulb went off in my head after staring at my fingers under a microscope. I thawed out the cadaver fingers and then sprayed them to be moist like live fingers. But I found that the pattern of perspiration is very specific in live fingers, so you can't just spray saline on dead fingertips and get away with it."

Within two years, Derakhshani had built a computer system that could detect live fingers from synthetic copies or cadavers in a mere two seconds.

"Fingerprinting is biometrics, and it's been around for thousands of years."

-Reza Derakhshani

The eyes have it

Derakhshani's interest in biometrics was piqued by his work with fingerprints. "At UMKC, I wanted to do something cool and brand new," he says. "So I thought I'd come up with a new biometrics system."

The most common biometrics systems scan fingerprints and the irises of eyes, says Derakhshani. They can quickly grant or deny access to your gym, your laptop computer or your bank account. Even Disney World uses biometrics systems to mitigate ticket fraud.

But iris captures, while highly accurate in close proximity, are difficult to read if a person is at a distance or not looking directly into the camera, he says.

When the camera misses the iris due to the angle of the gaze, it captures the vascular pattern of the sclera, episclera and conjunctiva, or white of the eye. This information is not used in iris-based systems, but Derakhshani says vasculature is unique to each human.

So Derakhshani decided to see if he could capture the "signature" created by the microcirculation under the thin transparent membrane of the eye.

He can – with a camera anyone can purchase at Target. And from 10 feet away. His work was patented in May 2008.

"When you scan the eye, the vascular pattern is there, but nobody had used it," he says. "This extra information can make an already accurate system more accurate, but [the system] was just tossing out good information. And this pattern can be detected from a distance so you can walk through a scanner rather than sitting in front of a camera. It speeds things up."

This automated way of establishing identity can be convenient. Rather than memorizing multiple passwords and personal identification numbers (PIN) – or worse, recording them on sticky notes left on your desk – biometrics systems are enabling users to employ something unique and always available to gain access and to secure information.

"Passwords can be forgotten or stolen," says Derakhshani. "You always have your eyes and fingerprints with you."

Safety at your fingertips

The practical application of fingerprints is something Doug Goodin (B.A. '75) knows well. He created a business based on fingerprint biometrics.

"The trouble with pass codes," explains Goodin, "is that there aren't a large number of possibilities. But a fingerprint is unique, so that's like having a PIN hundreds of digits long."

Goodin, who earned his UMKC undergraduate degree in broadcasting and went on to work with the police patrols he covered as a reporter, was introduced to biometrics when he began work in FBI labs trying to identify criminals and spies.

He started Nations ID several years ago after retiring from government service. Goodin's computer database and security consulting company develops and distributes identification cards with fingerprint sensors.

Most of his clients approached him seeking ways to limit access to high-value items such as bank vaults. He created a card that signals security personnel when it detects a second person trying to gain access.

"That lets them know you have a gun to your head," Goodin says.

Goodin, who is a member of the Comanche tribe, is also working with American Indian tribal nations to create fingerprint identity cards to ease foreign travel for members. The enhanced tribal cards and database management systems are compliant with requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and designed to meet Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protections requirements.

"A lot of states are going to enhanced drivers licenses now," Goodin says. "They cost more, but they allow you to get back into the United States more easily. Immigration isn't here to keep you out of the country, but if you show up with a library card as ID, it will take longer, and people aren't willing to wait. These cards make it easier for the right person to move through a border crossing."

Big Brother is watching

The enhanced IDs can also quickly alert law enforcement officials to possible wrongdoing by the cardholder.

Police in Los Angeles, England and Wales have recently been armed with handheld fingerprinting devices that enable officers to check identities within five minutes. The newly

Your body's biometrics

Hand geometry

Biometrics systems measure hands for shape and fingers for lengths and widths. The systems are popular because they're simple and inexpensive. However, hand-geometry information may change, especially in children. People with arthritis may also have difficulty with hand-geometry machines.

Facial thermogram

An infrared camera can capture heat passing through facial tissue from the underlying vascular system in the face. Facial thermograms are unique to each individual, and even plastic surgery, which does not reroute blood flow, doesn't change the face's signature. An infrared camera can record the thermogram in complete darkness.

Voice recognition

Differences in voice characteristics are based on the consistent size and shape of an individual's lips, mouth, vocal tracts and nasal cavities. Voice-recognition biometrics is rarely used for security because speech-based systems are sensitive to background noise and the emotional state of the speaker. They are commonly used as dictation tools.

Ear shape

Studies have shown biometrics using the shape of the entire ear to be more reliable than face profiles, which may change with facial expression and age. But hair can get in the way unless infrared cameras are used to record and match images of the ear. Ear-based biometrics systems could be installed on cell phones to identify the user.

Gait patterns

Gait biometrics aims to identify a person by the way he or she walks, runs or moves on his or her feet. It compares the length, width and strides. Unlike fingerprinting or ear-shape analysis, gait biometrics systems must identify a body part in motion. Police may use it in the future to scan a crowd for a suspect, but people can change the way they walk.

“Ten years ago,
if you had asked
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their shoes before
getting on a plane,
the reaction would
have been different.
Now, it seems
perfectly normal.”

-Kris Kobach

collected print is compared to national databases to determine if people are being truthful about their identity and whether they are suspected of a crime.

“Fingerprinting technology and databases that house the prints are getting faster and better and being disseminated more widely to numerous law enforcement agencies,” says Kris Kobach, J.D., UMKC School of Law professor. “Since 9/11, computers can go through a database of millions and match prints very quickly. Most people agree these advances don’t pose a great risk to privacy but have a huge value in protecting our country.”

The same is true of air travel, Kobach says.

“Most travelers are perfectly happy to deal with the minimal intrusion into the privacy of their bags because of the 9/11 experience,” he says. “It’s an inconvenience we’re willing to bear in order to have the knowledge that everybody is screened so it’s safer to fly. We got used to it very quickly. Ten years ago, if you had asked people to take off their shoes before getting on a plane, the reaction would have been different. Now, it seems perfectly normal.”

Kobach recalls the “Big Brother” accusations when Britain installed more than 4 million closed-circuit cameras on public streets, as well as the citizen complaints he heard as a city council member for Overland Park, Kan., when the council approved use of cameras at some intersections to gather information about traffic patterns and dangers, not to issue citations.

“With any change, people are naturally surprised or alarmed at first. But over time, even if it’s something they really strongly object to, people tend to become used to it – which can be a bad thing in a society vigilant about its privacy,” he says. “If something is truly obtrusive, you don’t want people becoming used to it and not caring.”

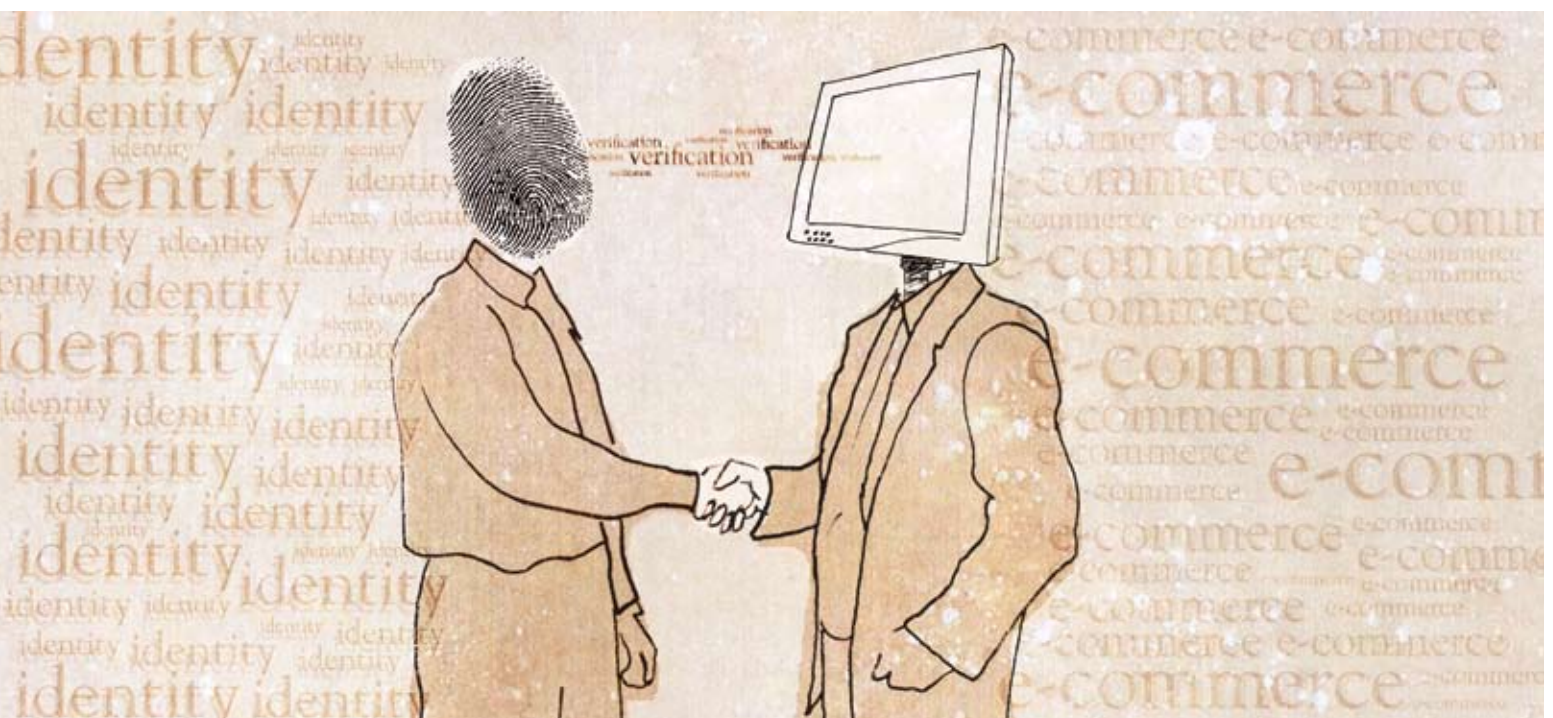
Kobach says the Overland Park traffic cameras are just the beginning.

“They’re a small step in a long road in which you could end up in a very high-surveillance society,” he says. “We’re definitely moving in that direction. It’s not just governments; private cameras are out there to protect property. In the course of any given day, someone living in Kansas City is probably photographed at least once, probably multiple times, and that’s only going to increase.”

Legislation will have to keep up, he says.

“State legislatures and Congress will be dealing with these issues in decades to come,” Kobach says. “They routinely regulate how individuals are permitted to interact with one another and what a merchant is allowed to do with information about you, so you’re certain to see them enacting laws to control how this kind of information is used.”

Derakhshani says he is careful to educate his students that while the technology they develop must be inherently neutral, the applications can pose problems they can’t always control but should try to anticipate.



“Any technology has side effects if it’s not used responsibly and wisely,” he says. “Look at cars – they get you to work but pollute the environment.”

Derakhshani recognizes people’s “legitimate concerns with having someone else in charge” of collecting and using their biometrics information.

However, he says, private citizens make up the majority of today’s biometrics market.

“They’re using it as a \$20 add-on to access their laptop with their fingerprint or to store their own data, so it can be a tremendous protector and friend of privacy,” Derakhshani says. “It all depends on how you use it. It’s just a tool.”

He predicts online applications are coming soon.

“Now, kids can buy something online with their parent’s credit card because the computer is blind and can’t tell who is using the card. I think instead it will be like you’re at the counter when you purchase something on the Internet. As we automate every process in health care and commerce, computers need to know who is interacting with them, and the way to do it is biometrics.”

For example, he says, if people lost their records in a hurricane, biometrics could be the only way for them to claim their entitlements. The United Nations is already using biometrics technology in refugee camps when people arrive without documentation.

Plamen Doynov, an interdisciplinary doctoral student who works in Derakhshani’s National Science Foundation-funded lab, says he is hopeful new biometrics applications will “make life better” from increasing home security – by replacing keys with fingerprint scans on doorknobs – to decreasing identity theft – it’s more difficult to replicate an iris than to steal a Social Security number.

“I’m thrilled to work on new frontiers,” he says. “We can really go wild with it. But one solution creates new problems as well. There is a human rights concern when this allows people to know who you are without asking you.”

Beyond identification

Biotechnology can be used not only to determine a person’s identity but also his or her emotional state. Derakhshani is also working on a project with UMKC Department of Psychology and University of Arizona researchers that may reveal how people are feeling without asking.

The interdisciplinary team is trying to determine emotional states by capturing and reading blink intensity with high-speed video.

Blink intensity is typically measured with electrodes attached to the eyelids. Derakhshani and his colleagues, including Diane Filion, Ph.D., Department of Psychology chair and assistant professor, and Christopher Lovelace, Ph.D., psychology assistant professor, are looking for an automated way to analyze videos to detect agitation based on blink responses.

“This is out of my domain of expertise, but I’ve always sought out interdisciplinary research,” Derakhshani says. “I subscribe to the philosophy that if you stay within a well-defined discipline, you’ll miss all the cool and exciting things that fall between the tracks. There are so many things that need to be discovered that are often left unnoticed because they’re on the fringes of a discipline that a lot of people know about. As an engineer, it’s hard to talk to psychologists or medical doctors. We use different terms, think differently and research differently, but I really enjoy those challenges.”

The psycho-physiological biometrics blink study has just begun, but initial results are encouraging, Derakhshani says.

“If we can get it robust enough and with enough specificity, I can see this integrated into a biometrics access system in high schools to help prevent shootings,” he says. “The system could scan and identify you, and if you were in an agitated state, it might flag an attendant to look into the situation. It potentially adds a layer of security to a system and could maybe prevent tragedies like Virginia Tech.”

The system could also identify and monitor people arriving at airports or government buildings unbeknownst to them, Doynov says.

“Biometrics is continuously evolving, and as the technology becomes more and more available and cheaper and cheaper, it opens the door for some of these systems to be employed,” he says. “The most exciting thing is to think about and predict where things will go 10 years from now.” ■



Top: Kris Kobach. Above: Reza Derakhshani.





And the winners are...

Meet the recipients of UMKC's 2009 Alumni Awards

by ERICK SCHMIDT

ALVIN BROOKS

Alumnus of the Year

Alvin Brooks (B.A. '59, M.A. '73, College of Arts and Sciences) recalls how, at age 10, he accidentally walked into The Kansas City Club, an elite business and social club then open to white men only, to pay his family's electric bill. Rather than a receipt, Brooks got a lesson in the difficulties African-Americans faced in the 1940s as he was called derogatory names.

"Over time, I began to understand through my parents and own experiences the difference in this country of ours as it relates to race and opportunities," he says.

Brooks has spent the subsequent years investing his time in shaping a safer and more just Kansas City. Being a prominent face in the community is a lifestyle he says has its rewards in the changes he has seen since the days of his youth.

"If you have a social consciousness about you, you want to feel that you're doing this not only for yourself," Brooks says. "You're doing it for others so that they won't have to end up suffering through the same kind of embarrassment, disenfranchisement, belittlement and berating merely because of the color of their skin, religion, sexual orientation or gender. It's for all of us."

His role in Kansas City during the past half-century has led him down paths of public service, civil rights and urban progress. Brooks has served as a Kansas City police officer, councilman and mayor pro-tem, and he founded the community organization Ad Hoc Group Against Crime. For this and more, he is honored as the 2009 UMKC Alumnus of the Year.

"I get a lot more out of helping folks than I get out of being helped. I think it's a calling for me. It's a mission," Brooks says. "Many times when you help people, you never get a thank you. But you don't do it for that reason anyway. You do it because you know it's the right thing to do."



MARGARET EVANS

Defying the Odds Award

Margaret Evans (M.P.A. '73, Bloch School of Business and Public Administration) has defied the odds ever since she attended UMKC in the 1970s. At that time, she worked full-time jobs to pay for her education, as well as balancing the bills of her terminally ill father. She says the lessons she learned during that difficult time helped in her career ascension, and it was all thanks to her father.

"My dad told us we had to work hard to get what we want, and work harder than others worked, and I focused on that," she says. "I told my kids the same thing and taught them to show me they were working hard with their grades."

Evans was the first African-American woman to receive a Ford Foundation Fellowship in the Bloch School of Business and Public Administration, and she was also the first African-American woman to be promoted to a management position within the Government Employees Hospital Association (GEHA), Inc. She has spent the past 30 years at GEHA, where she was key in the creation of the Human Resources department. Years from now, though, she says she would prefer her legacy to be more personal.

"I'd like to be remembered for always reaching back and bringing others up with me, helping the disadvantaged who didn't have the same opportunities as everyone else," she says with a smile. "And for being the best mother and grandmother in the world."

TRACY STEVENS

Spotlight Award

Tracy Stevens (M.D. '90, School of Medicine) says it's the people she's surrounded herself with – friends, family and colleagues – who helped develop her passion for medicine into a career she loves. Since earning her medical degree at UMKC, Stevens has set out to build a relationship with patients on a foundation of trust and reliability.

"I try to challenge those I train not to treat a patient as a number or a disease, but as a person with a family and a history," she says.

Stevens serves as the medical director for the Saint Luke's Muriel I. Kauffman Women's Heart Center, where she works in preventive cardiology and heart transplantation. She has won the Mayo Clinic Outstanding Achievement Award in Cardiovascular Health, served as president of the local division of the American Heart Association and helped bring then first lady Laura Bush to Kansas City to promote the Heart Truth Campaign, which helps increase women's awareness of heart disease.

She puts a premium on respecting and appreciating every patient she helps. It's a lesson she says she learned years ago when her husband, Brian Lee, assured her that a late-night call into the emergency room was not an inconvenience.

"He told me, 'That patient doesn't want to be there either,'" Stevens recalls. "From that moment, I learned a patience and calmness that I think I carry every day."





REANER SHANNON

Bill French Alumni Service Award

Reaner Shannon (M.A. '78, Ph.D. '83, School of Education), winner of the 2008 Bill French Alumni Service Award, has been involved with UMKC for more than three decades as a student, educator and a voice for minority students interested in the School of Medicine.

"I think the University is central to the city. I was fortunate not only to get my education there, but to work there for thirty-some years," says Shannon.

Shannon was involved with several of the School of Medicine's outreach programs, including the Summer Scholars and Saturday Academy programs, which help expose academically gifted minority and disadvantaged high-school students to health-care careers. Under her direction, the Summer Scholars program helped 81 students gain admission to the University's six-year medicine program.

Of her achievements, she says simply: "There was a need. There was a void in my community for getting underrepresented minorities into the medical field."

Though she retired in 2008, Shannon still emphasizes the importance of education for the next generation of students by participating in community activities, such as youth reading programs.

"I'd like to think I made an impact in the lives of those students who, in some case, might not have known that studying medicine was even an option," Shannon says. "It was important for me to build in the lives of young people, to help them in any way that I could to succeed."

Alumni Achievement Award Winners

College of Arts and Sciences

Rebekah Presson Mosby
(M.A. '87)

Conservatory of Music and Dance

Paul Hartfield (Grad. '82)

Henry W. Bloch School of Business and Public Administration

Michael B. Wood
(M.P.A. '79)

School of Biological Sciences

Dee Denver (Ph.D. '02)

School of Computing and Engineering

Srikanth Hosakote
(M.A. '93)

Dental Hygiene

Phyllis Martina
(B.S.D.H. '78)

School of Dentistry

R. Wayne Thompson
(D.D.S. '67, M.S. '72)

School of Education

Joe Seabrooks (B.A. '93,
M.A. '95, Ed.Sp. '96,
Ph.D. '01)

School of Law

Richard Halliburton
(B.B.A. '63, J.D. '69)

School of Medicine

James Stanford
(B.A. '79, M.D. '80)

School of Nursing

Winifred Copeland
(B.S.N. '58, M.A. '62)

School of Pharmacy

Steve Erickson
(B.S.P. '75)

The Alumni Awards Luncheon is April 16. Call 816-235-1563 for tickets.

Read more about this year's award winners online.

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Listen up!

Fun facts and figures about UMKC's public radio station



89.3 FM
YOUR SOURCE FOR
NPR NEWS

In **1**
week

KCUR broadcasts:

- 130 hours of news
- 29 hours of music
- 9 hours of variety shows

and approximately

190,300

people tune in to listen.

9,700

The average number of people listening to KCUR at any time.



Power of
KCUR

100,000
watts

Top 5

most popular shows:

- Morning Edition
- Car Talk
- All Things Considered
- A Prairie Home Companion
- Whad'Ya Know?

The number of records in
Chuck "Haddock" Haddix's
personal collection

4,000

CDs

&



5,000

LPs

In the Marr Sound Archives:

30,000

records



57%

The percentage of the KCUR audience that listens exclusively to KCUR or considers it their first choice.



The average amount of time a listener spends tuned in to KCUR each week.



270

The number of active KCUR volunteers in 2008.

1,190 hours

The amount of time those volunteers contributed.



In 2008, KCUR was named KC Press Club's Radio Station of the Year.

The number of visits to kcur.org within the last 12 months:

500,906

Ranking of out-of-state visitors (excludes Kansas):

1. Wisconsin
2. California
3. Illinois



48

The average age of KCUR listeners

yrs

The number of full-time KCUR staff members:

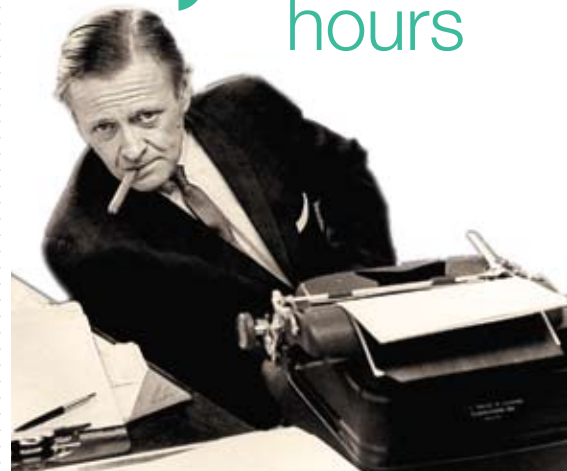
21

Oct. 21, 1957

The date KCUR first signed on the air.

9,000

hours



The length of time Walt Bodine has spent on air.



Out of the classroom

as told to DONNA MENNONA DILKS



Not all students are confined to campus, transcribing lecture notes and poring over books in the library. Meet four very different and very busy students, all entering their last semesters of study, as they offer a glimpse of how they manage to complete degree programs and work in their chosen fields at the same time.

Matthew Wright

Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design

College of Arts and Sciences

I grew up in Belton, Mo., in a typical suburban development. I guess you could say my family sheltered me from the realities of “urban living.” I definitely wanted to come to school in Kansas City for college.

When I got here, I was oblivious to the history of the city. My first course in the program was History of Urban Planning with Professor Jacob Wagner. I learned so much. For instance, until that class, I didn’t realize what a detriment the automobile had been to the urban core of the city. Once you look back into the history of neighborhoods and how they flourish or die, you can see how good or bad planning affects people’s lives.

Over the summer, I studied the Ivanhoe neighborhood on an internship. It’s a huge neighborhood – about 40 blocks – in midtown Kansas City. It’s been really neglected, and unfortunately afflicted with crime and other social problems, but it was once one of the most fashionable places to live in the city. There are still original homes, but they have been neglected.

There are a lot of families who live there. They aren’t part of the problem, but they are at a disadvantage. I spent around four weeks doing site visits and documenting things, looking at all the structures, studying maps, visiting the Missouri Valley Room at the downtown library and accessing a lot of various media about the neighborhood.

Ivanhoe is a great example of a neighborhood that is regenerating. Property values are going up, they have a very strong neighborhood council, they’ve closed down many, many drug houses and are really changing it for the better.

And earlier this year, we did a charette, or a collaborative study and presentation, on the Southwest Trafficway and its effect on the surrounding area. It was a lot of work: We spent the first eight weeks of the semester researching traffic, economic data, neighborhood history, and we met with some neighborhood organizations.

We did a poster presentation of almost 50 boards. We had historical photos and timelines. We showed how churches and schools functioned and still function and looked at the density of the shops and businesses along the Trafficway.

It was intense: going back through those historical documents, doing site studies, interviewing residents and tracking down information. Our findings were shared with the neighborhood and business communities, and hopefully they can use our suggestions to make the Trafficway more appealing and user-friendly for the people who live and work there.

I have really gotten so much out of this program, things I never even knew that I would discover. I like the diversity of the city environment. I’ve now developed a strong interest in social justice. In my studying and in my work, I came to really understand that there is an unfair representation of Kansas City’s East Side. It is undeserved ... the families and neighbors who live there really do deserve to have better services and shops, and more access to transportation and good jobs and good schools.

Too much has already been lost. But hopefully, good urban planners can help turn things around for historic neighborhoods and help make them vibrant communities again.



Kansas City’s urban core serves as a real-world classroom for AUPD student Matthew Wright.



Janita Butler, a member of the Institute for Urban Education's first class, will teach full time in an urban school after graduation this summer.

Janita Butler Institute for Urban Education School of Education

I was raised in Kansas City and attended elementary and middle school here. I went to Paseo Academy for one year, but then we moved to Indianapolis. That's where I finished high school. I never really stayed in one school for very long – I moved around a lot. But I think that's why I wanted to come back to Kansas City, get settled and work here.

I was already attending the UMKC School of Education when Professor Jennifer Waddell spoke to me about applying for the Institute for Urban Education. UMKC wanted to start this program to address the needs of urban students.

From the first year, they place us in the city's schools to observe and aid the teachers. I've been in several Kansas City schools over the past four years. This year, I've been in Garcia Elementary, in Miss Seim's second-grade classroom. I've been observing and helping with the curriculum and the daily routine. I can't wait, though, till I get the chance to do it all myself in my last semester. I'm really looking forward to it.

My heart is all about working in the city; that's where I want to be. So I applied and got accepted for the first class. We'll graduate this spring and go to work right away.

The traditional way of teaching is not right for all kids. At the Institute, we learn a lot about culturally relevant teaching; that is, how to try and tailor your teaching to each individual child. It takes patience and a lot of commitment and thinking. We also learn about diversity in the classroom, learning disabilities, current theories, assessment and other useful things.

The kids are so cute! But still, it's a real challenge trying to figure out what pace is right for them, which ones need more of your

attention, which need to go slower or faster. You need a lot of energy.

I love so much about this program. It's given me so much experience. Our cohort has been together since day one. That means that we started out together, took every class together and worked on group projects. It gives us a built-in support system. And the required student-teaching has given me the opportunity to build relationships with teachers, parents and students.

To be a good teacher, it's more than learning all the education and sociology theories. You have to really have the passion to work with children and help them learn, every day. I hope I can reach each child on an individual level and make a difference in his or her life. ■

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Registered nurse Janet Klein (left) is completing her B.S.N. program on the job, while learning is one big song and dance for Conservatory student Mary Jo Duggan (right). Read about these students' experiences online.

PERSPECTIVES.UMKC.EDU

Miss Lofthus' scholars

Surprise deliveries build community from KC to NYC



Hannah Lofthus stood in her third-grade classroom early last fall, surrounded by boxes. Tears streamed down her face as she opened a package, read the enclosed card and poured out the letters, photos and drawings onto the rug. The messages from UMKC undergraduates to her third-graders in Brooklyn linked her to home and completed a circle begun early in her college career.

Lofthus grew up in Blue Springs, Mo., the daughter of two teachers. “I wasn’t interested in teaching,” she says. “I wanted to be a lawyer. I joined the mock trial team and was ready to go to law school at UMKC.” But her time with mentors in the honors program led her to change her life – and the lives of many others.

“I have no words to explain that moment . . . It was the most beautiful thing, seeing that so many people care about my kids.” -Hannah Lofthus

As part of a sophomore-year honors program assignment, she began volunteering at the University Academy Charter School at 68th and Holmes in Kansas City, Mo. “I was blown away,” she says. Her father suggested she read *Savage Inequalities* and *The Shame of the Nation* by education activist Jonathan Kozol. “It clicked for me,” Lofthus says. “I started doing community service with the kids and was hired to run an after-school program. I fell in love with it.”

Eventually, Lofthus knew she had to work in education. She started to research the possibilities. Even though the prestigious Teach for America program didn’t recruit at UMKC, she was accepted into the nationally competitive program.

A few months before Lofthus received her surprise delivery, Jim Sheppard, a UMKC associate professor and associate director of the Honors College, stood in his house with a package of his own.

At the end of the spring semester, Sheppard was going through a rough patch, wondering if his life as a teacher really mattered, if he affected his philosophy and environmental ethics students. Sure, he taught them Leo Tolstoy’s classic fable *The Three Questions*, which asks people to consider how their actions affect the people around them. Sure, he taught about balance and community, about how to consider human relationships and cities as vital to the life of the planet. But, Sheppard says, “I was just starting to get into one of those questioning mindsets.”

Summer term had just begun when the package from New York arrived at Sheppard’s house.

“There was a nice note from Hannah and then a series of illustrations and letters from her students,” Sheppard remembers. “She had told her students about me and the impact I’d had on her. She wanted them to talk about what a legacy was.”

Through his tears, Sheppard read about the hopes of Lofthus’ students. “Several said how important Hannah was to them in helping them believe in their dreams,” he says.

Lofthus says that Sheppard helped her figure out her own dreams. “I had no interest in philosophy until I took Foundations of Philosophy with Dr. Sheppard,” she says, laughing. She ended up majoring in philosophy along with her political science major.

That philosophy class sparked Lofthus’ interest at around the same time she started working at University Academy. With Sheppard,

she co-led a discussion on race, class and philosophy at UMKC and pursued independent studies. Eventually, she took his Environmental Ethics class. “I totally rearranged my schedule to take that class,” she says. She felt, like many other people, that she did her part for the environment. “But that class solidified for me that if you aren’t going to care for the environment, no one else is,” she says. “It made me think about a world in which the kids I care for so deeply won’t be able to enjoy the things we can.”

During Lofthus’ time at University Academy, education stopped feeling like a choice she didn’t want to make and became more of a destiny, a responsibility to others. “Jim made me feel the same way about the environment,” she says. “He made me look at cities and our ethical responsibility to the planet very differently.”

So, after an intensive Teach for America “boot camp” in Queens during the summer of 2007, and her first few months of teaching at Leadership Preparatory Charter School in Brooklyn, she jumped into a large project on the environment with her students. Lofthus wanted her second-graders to know that heroes and activists aren’t just long-gone folks like Martin Luther King Jr. or W.E.B. DuBois.

“I told them that Dr. Sheppard had ignited this fire in me about the environment and given me faith in the work we do for it,” she says. She read them Jon J. Muth’s picture-book version of Tolstoy’s *The Three Questions*. She explained how Sheppard had assigned her that reading as well. “The kids really got into it and connected to the fact they felt a close bond to someone somewhere across the world, and they were very moved.”

The students, even without prompts from Lofthus, created artwork and wrote letters to Sheppard. At the end of the year, she packed them up and sent them off to him in Kansas City.

The package arrived at the perfect time. Immediately, Sheppard says, “wheels started turning in my head.” He showed the kids’ letters to his two philosophy and ethics summer school classes and floated the idea of replying to the children.

Though it wasn’t an assignment in either class, almost all of his 40 students decided to write to the students a thousand miles away. “I’ve never seen such moving responses,” Sheppard says.

Sheppard’s students handwrote letters about dreams, about college, about Kansas City. Some of the parents in his classes sent pictures of their children. “It was a big colorful pile of responses,” Sheppard says, “and I thought it would be a shame just to send it back without having someone else at least look at it.”

Sheppard showed both sets of letters to Karen English, director of alumni relations at the College of Arts and Sciences. “I thought, maybe I can put a basket together of things to send to the class,” she says.

English set off on a mission across campus and gathered more than a few little things, as Lofthus found out when she opened the massive boxes packed with stuff: Thirty UMKC T-shirts so big the kids could use them as sleep shirts. Thirty little ‘Roos. Thirty notebooks, folders, pens. Thirty toy robots from the School of Computer and Engineering. Thirty Homecoming boomerangs.

“I have no words to explain that moment,” Lofthus says. “I was just bawling my eyes out. It was the most beautiful thing, seeing that so many people care about my kids and care about the work.”

The students now earn the gifts as rewards, and Lofthus reads one letter a week so she can sustain their interest over time and keep their thoughts focused on the planet, on building community and on eventually heading to college.

At the end of *The Three Questions*, a wise man answers the questions the king has put to him, saying:

“Remember there’s only one important time and that time is now. The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion.

The most important person is the person who is right before you. The most important pursuit is making that person, the one before you, happy, for that alone is the pursuit of life.”

“People think college students are in it for the money,” Sheppard says. “This is the perfect counterpoint to that. This a story about bridging generations, about what we do through cities.”

Lofthus agrees that the adventure of teaching about activism and the environment in one of the world’s great cities wouldn’t have been possible without UMKC’s urban campus. “I learned that the classroom was not just theoretical or hypothetical,” she says. Her classroom work with mentors like Sheppard balanced her community work at University Academy. That work, she says, “grabbed my heart and made me go on this path.”

SUZI STEFFEN



Alumna Hannah Lofthus (B.A. '07) is passing on the lessons she learned from a favorite UMKC professor to her students in Brooklyn.

The search is over

Interim chancellor Leo Morton accepts permanent position

Leo Morton came to UMKC last August as interim chancellor, having just retired from his role as a chief administrative officer at energy company, Aquila (now part of Great Plains Energy). He had been a UMKC trustee since 2000 and became chair of the board in 2006. Morton accepted the permanent chancellor role in December.

People often wonder what a chancellor does. How would you answer that now?

A chancellor is a combination of a lot of things: a cheerleader, a collaborator, a problem solver. The idea is to keep everything level so we can focus on what the University's mission is, which is to educate our great students and to be of service to the community. To do that, we have to make sure we're listening and connected and communicating with people. I've found that almost everywhere I go, people want me to get up and speak about the University, so obviously, you have to be comfortable with that, and with communicating to a variety of different audiences. I come across so many impromptu opportunities to talk to people about the University – someone might just stop by when I'm out at lunch, and I have to think how this person might support UMKC and its purpose. That might be the one chance I have to make that connection so I have to be ready.

What surprised you most about your role as chancellor?

I knew it was a busy job, but I didn't know it was 24/7. It's like being in a fishbowl – I am always representing the University – even on the weekends, I'm still going.

What similarities have you found between running a business and running a university?

I think the challenges are the same. In a business, you have to work at getting individuals within the business aligned with its strategy, mission, purpose and vision. You want to be able to establish that there's something to accomplish and get everyone excited about that and show them how what they do is aligned with the achievement of that ultimate purpose. That's no different here at UMKC. It's about achieving that alignment and making sure we're serving the University's purpose. In doing that, there are a host of issues that come up and get in the way – that's why I've often described myself as like one of the sweepers in a game of curling who clears the stone's path to the goal.

What do you think is the biggest challenge for UMKC right now?

My biggest challenge is going to be raising money for our four signature projects: the Miller Nichols Library, the Institute for Urban Education, the Institute for Entrepreneurship and



Innovation, and the Conservatory expansion. In this economy, it's especially important that I make sure that the investors who wish to support the University understand that they are not replacing state funding but supplementing it. We are making adjustments to our budget to compensate for any reduced state support. The funds we raise from outside would go above and beyond that, to help us achieve the level of excellence we strive for.

When you took on the role as interim chancellor, you said you believed someone from academia should take on the permanent role. What changed your mind?

First of all, in being here I've been exposed to so many people in the University and our supporters outside the University who kept suggesting that I should take on the role permanently. They told me what they thought I could accomplish here. Just being here and becoming more familiar with what actually goes on, I saw that I could really do something here. I wouldn't want to be anywhere I felt I couldn't make a difference – you get to a certain age where you don't want to waste your time. This University is so important to the community and to the region, that if I can make a difference here, it will be the most important thing I can do with my time and my energies.

Faculty earn Fulbrights

Two UMKC professors are spending the 2008-09 academic year abroad as part of the Fulbright Scholar Program, the government's chief program for international educational exchange. Only 800 U.S. faculty and professionals are accepted into the prestigious program each year.

Kathy Krause, Ph.D., associate professor and director of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature in the College of Arts and Sciences, is spending her time in Europe researching "Female Lordship and Literary Production in Flanders and Picardy in the 13th and Early 14th Centuries" through the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium.

The Bloch School's Sidne Gail Ward, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Finance, Information Management and Strategy, was awarded a grant to research and lecture on the "Impact of Information Systems and e-Learning" at Kathmandu University in Nepal.



Frustrated by the lack of material he could find about famous trials, School of Law Professor Douglas Linder decided to create an online resource.

Trial by wire(less)

Professor's Web site is one of the most accessed online law resources

If lawsuits are, as UMKC School of Law Professor Douglas O. Linder contends, windows into history, his Famous Trials Web site offers a full-blown panoramic.

Drawing from legal proceedings from as far back as the trial of Socrates in 399 B.C. to as recent as the trial of 9/11 terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui in 2006, Linder's Famous Trials Web site (www.umkc.edu/famoustrials) has become widely known in academia as the place to look for primary source information and analysis on trials from throughout history.

The Web site, which gets between 6 and 8 million hits every month, is visited by university scholars and middle-school students alike. Type "Salem witch trials" or "O.J. Simpson" into a search engine, and Linder's site will be one of the top results. Among other honors, the International Society for Technology in Education named the site one of the 100 best for secondary teachers.

When Linder started the site in 1996, though, it was simply envisioned as a teaching tool for his seminar on famous trials.

"I was always frustrated by the material that I had to work with," he says.

So he started putting course material online. Beginning with the Scopes Monkey Trial, Linder went on to add more than 50 famous trials, and the list continues to grow. Each trial is summarized in detailed essays by Linder and backed up with an impressive collection of primary source material.

"Essentially, I started building it to better teach the course," Linder says. "But I discovered that there were a lot of other people who had an interest. At some point we began to see a substantially bigger audience."

When Linder began his Web site 12 years ago, the Internet was in its infancy.

"It was clear to me that what the Web really needed was deep content," he says.

So Linder packed his site with as much material as he could find.

For the Scopes trial, he has posted a copy of Tennessee's anti-evolution statute and the story of creation from the Book of Genesis. For the 1976 trial of Patty Hearst, there are countless pictures and images, a trial transcript and a video of the bank robbery.

Linder has drawn some of the material for the Web site from his own collections, as well as his own knowledge. (Before he adds a new trial he reads two or three books about it.) But Linder has also made trips to the Library of Congress and to regional offices of the National Archives. He's worked with courts throughout the country to gather historic records. And occasionally he has come across people who were personally involved and have information to share.

Audio archives on the Chicago Seven trial page came from the defense law firm's office manager, for example.

"It's a lot of digging and trying to find things people couldn't find on their own," he says.

Linder, who has been teaching at the Law School since 1979, has developed Web sites for all his courses since launching the Famous Trials site. He hopes giving students a plethora of information online will also give them a more complete view.

"I think good learning is kind of kaleidoscopic," he says. "You look at things from many different perspectives and find the truth some place in between."

Looking through a historical window, he adds, "shouldn't create moral certainty about anything."

"I think history teaches you to be skeptical about everything."

SUZANNE KING

Class notes

70s

David F. Duncan (B.A. '70, College of Arts and Sciences) was named Visiting Professor of Public Health at Western Kentucky University. He is clinical associate professor of medicine at Brown University in Providence, R.I., and served as an adviser on drug policy to the Clinton White House.

Donald L. Gilmore (B.A. '71, M.A. '76, College of Arts and Sciences) of Belton, Mo., has a novel scheduled to appear in national book stores in February 2009. *Riding Vengeance with the James Gang* will be published by Pelican Publishing Co.

Tom Holcom (B.B.A. '72, Henry W. Bloch School of Business and Public Administration) is president of Kansas City-based Pioneer Services. He was recently elected chair of the Truman Medical Center Charitable Foundation Board of Directors.

John D. Owen (M.D. '79, School of Medicine) of Liberty, Mo., was promoted from colonel to brigadier general in the Missouri Air National Guard. After six years as state air surgeon, Owen was recently reassigned to serve as the chief of staff of the Missouri Air National Guard.

Janet Stern Solomon (M.B.A. '76, Bloch School) of Chevy Chase, Md., and her husband, former UMKC law professor Lewis Solomon, co-wrote a book: *Bratproofing Your Children: How to Raise Socially and Financially Responsible Kids*, published by Barricade Books.

80s

Dennis H. Giesing (Ph.D. '83, School of Pharmacy) was named head of research and development at Cortria, a Boston-based pharmaceutical firm focused on developing medicines to fight cardiovascular disease.

George Guastello (M.B.A. '84, Bloch School) of Leawood, Kan., was named CEO and director of Kansas City's Union Station. Guastello is the former CEO of the American Royal.

Michael O'Brien (B.A. '81, College of Arts and Sciences) was named director of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services. He will direct more than 900 state employees who serve Oklahomans with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation, independent living and residential and outreach education programs.

Diana Slickman (B.A. '83, College of Arts and Sciences) of Chicago, appeared in the cast of *The Trojan Candidate* at Theater Oobleck in Chicago.

Chris Smoot (M.P.A. '86, Bloch School) is programme director for World Vision Somalia. He has worked in the humanitarian industry in a variety of leadership positions.

90s

Derek Feagans (J.D. '98, School of Law) of Kansas City, Mo., was named general counsel for Bernstein-Rein, where he oversees all legal issues related to the marketing communications agency.

Jeff Goode (M.F.A. '92, College of Arts and Sciences) of Los Angeles, won Distinguished Achievement in Writing at the 39th annual Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards for his play, *Love Loves a Pornographer*.

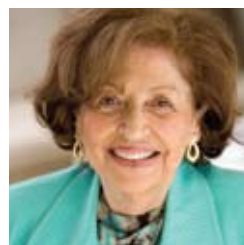
David Pendergrass (Ph.D. '97, School of Biological Sciences) was selected as one of five Outstanding Educators for 2008 by the University of Kansas' Torch chapter of the Mortar Board national senior honor society. Pendergrass is a program associate with the Biology Program at KU-Edwards.

00s

Jennifer Barnett (B.A. '00, College of Arts and Sciences) is an instructor in Oklahoma Baptist University's Intensive English Program. She also holds leadership positions at Indian Nations Baptist Church in Seminole, Okla., and Robert Haskins School of Leadership in Hennessey, Okla.

Aman Sabharwal (M.D. '00, School of Medicine) of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., has been appointed Chief Utilization Officer and Medical Director of Clinical Resource Management for the Jackson Health System. He has been at Jackson Memorial Hospital since 2000.

Daniel Moon (J.D. '06, School of Law) of Kansas City, Mo., joined the Warren Financial Group, Inc. Moon will be providing asset management and investment advisory services to individual and corporate clients.



From left: Pastor Heidi McGinness finds her calling fighting for human rights in the Sudan; early African-American alumni recognized in recent exhibit; Norman Newcomb, son of the University's first chief administrative officer, celebrates UMKC's 75th anniversary; honoring Women's Center founder Ruth Margolin. Read these alumni stories, plus more class notes and campus news online.

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MAR. 13 - APR. 5, 2009

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APR. 3 - 26, 2009
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