WELCOME TO THE FUTURE
What will her world look like?

ALUMNI PREDICTIONS ON: Health • Money • Homes • Food • Education
The Best Wipe Out

As we were finishing this issue and thanking all the alumni and faculty who helped us put it together, I began to think back on my favorite alumni story from this past year. And while there were so many, the best story is one that still makes me tear up, and it’s happening as I type this. It’s a story of this alumni family and the powerful partnerships you all have.

As the UMKC Alumni Association planned its annual alumni awards luncheon, a fundraiser for student scholarships and immediate aid, our student affairs office told us about an urgent problem: the hundreds of outstanding students who had a financial hold on their accounts. The holds — often $500 or less — were preventing them from being able to re-enroll or obtain transcripts at graduation. For many students, the hold meant stepping out of school to earn more money, which statistically means they are less likely to return.

The Alumni Association quickly agreed to tackle the issue for as many students as possible. On each table at the luncheon was a chalkboard with one student’s monetary need. Raymond Cattaneo (M.D. ’03, pictured), then-president of the Alumni Association, challenged each table to literally wipe out that student’s hold.

"Just imagine the look on our students’ faces when they are informed that UMKC alumni and friends had enough faith in them and their dream to pay off their holds — sight unseen, no questions asked, nothing needed in return," he said.

You should have seen the more than 500 people in that room take up the challenge. Further, alumni Leo Sweeney (B.A. ’51) partnered with the Alumni Association to establish the Sweeney Family Support Fund, which will aid worthy students with holds going forward. Other alumni offered to match gifts on the floor.

The result? Enough money was raised to wipe out the holds for the students represented in the room that April day and more. I’ll close by letting one of the recipients share what that gesture meant to her:

Dear UMKC Alumni Association,

First of all, thank you for your generosity in paying off my balances owed to the university. I cried when I saw the email! You see, I recently graduated with my master’s in social work. I have passed my state licensure exams but needed my loan to pay off my UMKC debt and be able to pay for my two licenses. Imagine the surprise when I opened my email to the news that you all were covering my balance due.

I am a social worker; it’s my life’s mission and my husband is a firefighter. Thank you for helping us in our mission to serve the vulnerable citizens of our amazing city. You will never know what a blessing this was for us. We promise to pay it forward!

Thank you for the many ways you make a difference in the lives of our students!

Lisan Tammeus Mann, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Alumni and Constituent Relations

OVERHEARD...

"As I look at the graduates here today, I know in my heart you can be anything you want to be. A degree from UMKC can take you anywhere."

–Edie McClurg (B.A. ’61, picture on page 32)

"Don’t listen to people who tell you not to reinvent the wheel. I would encourage you to try anyway. You’ll be better for the experience, and that’s how we get better wheels."

–John Carmack, video-gaming and technology pioneer and 2017 honorary doctorate recipient

We want to hear from you! Send us your comments at perspectives.umkc.edu.

"We are products of UMKC with a long history of excellence. We don’t arrive at this support without those who’ve helped us along the way. Thanks to UMKC for its part in our development."

–Esther George (EMBA ’00), UMKC 2017 Alumna of the Year
The newly created UMKC Health Sciences District combines the unique expertise and services of 10 partners to spur research and community outreach in service of the Kansas City region and beyond. The district includes UMKC and its:

- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing and Health Studies
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Dentistry

And also:

- Truman Medical Centers
- Children’s Mercy Hospital
- Kansas City, Missouri, Health Department
- Missouri Department of Mental Health
- Center for Behavioral Medicine
- Jackson County Medical Examiner

Representatives from each organization gathered in May to sign a memorandum of understanding. The district will be governed by a board of approximately 20 members, including two from each institution.

By including agencies of the city, county and state, the UMKC Health Sciences District is one of a kind.

“We have all worked together already for a long time, and worked very well together, but this opens a new chapter,” said then-Chancellor Leo E. Morton.

Drawing on these institutions’ efforts, the district has the potential to enhance collaboration on education, research and grant requests; combine efforts on community engagement; improve faculty recruitment; coordinate area parking, safety and transportation; and create shared opportunities in wellness for more than 16,000 health professionals, faculty members and students.
Chancellor Leo E. Morton retiring after nine years of victories

BY JOHN MARTELLARO

What is the best measure of an individual’s impact on a university and a community? Is it in dollars and cents raised? Square footage of new buildings? Increases in enrollment? Honors and accolades for yourself, the team you have built and the institution you have led? What about examples set, and lives changed?

In all these ways and many more, the impact of now-Chancellor Emeritus Leo E. Morton has been singular and dramatic since he was named chancellor in 2008. Morton retires from his nine-year stint as chancellor this October. He has taken the position of chief operating officer at DeBruce Companies, a Kansas City company with strong philanthropic roots.

At UMKC, many will remember him as one of the longest-serving and most successful chancellors in university history.

Building success from the ground up

During his tenure as chancellor, UMKC opened two new residence halls, a major learning center with more than 1,000 classroom seats, a 1,500-space parking structure, a new Student Union, primary biology and chemistry teaching laboratories.

One of Morton’s most public campaigns was for a new downtown home for the Conservatory of Music and Dance. With new support from the University of Missouri Board of Curators and System, that fundraising project is moving forward—a $21.5 million renovation and modernization project for the university’s primary biology and chemistry teaching laboratories.

Brookside 51, a major on-campus development featuring a Whole Foods Market, a new UMKC Student Health and Counseling Center, 170 market-rate apartments and a six-story parking garage with 445 spaces, is nearing completion.

The Morton years will also be known for the launch of programs vital to UMKC’s urban mission and strategic plan: the Atterbury Student Success Center, the Honors College, the Latinx Studies program, the Urban Education Research Center, the UMKC Health Sciences District, University College, the Center for Neighborhoods and a new Strategic Plan for Diversity.

During his tenure as chancellor of Kansas City’s premier urban-serving research university, Morton presided over a period of significant growth in enrollment and the university’s most successful capital campaign in its history. The Campaign for UMKC, a seven-year effort to raise $250 million in capital funding for the university, concluded in September 2016 with a total of $302,534,370 raised, more than 20 percent above its original goal of $250 million. More than $60 million of that total has been dedicated to scholarships, and another $20 million to endowed chairs and other forms of faculty support.

Connecting the campus to the community

UMKC support for entrepreneurship in Kansas City flourished under Morton, through support of both the Bloch School and the UMKC Innovation Center. In 2013, the Innovation Center launched Digital Sandbox KC, a highly successful proof-of-concept program providing guidance and support for entrepreneurs and early-stage companies in the tech sector. Digital Sandbox has performed so well, then-U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker called it “the single best investment the federal Economic Development Administration has ever made.”

Community engagement has been a hallmark of the Morton years. UMKC established an Entrepreneur Hall of Fame through the Bloch School, as well as the Starr Women’s Hall of Fame, which honors extraordinary women who have made their mark on the greater Kansas City community. In 2015, UMKC was selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for the foundation’s coveted Community Engagement Classification. The program recognizes campuses that are improving teaching and learning, producing research that makes a difference in communities and revitalizing their civic and academic missions.

Morton’s immense contributions have not gone unnoticed by Greater Kansas City. In 2014, Morton was named “Kansas Citian of the Year” by the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. The honor, presented annually since 1960, recognizes “those persons whose civic contributions and achievements have reflected the insight, creativity and consciousness necessary to build and maintain a quality urban community.”

Provost Barbara A. Richehmyer will serve as interim chancellor until a permanent chancellor is named. Though Morton will be deeply missed, she says, his impact will be felt on the UMKC campus — and throughout Kansas City — for decades to come.
Inspired Beginnings. Great Journeys.

Alumni storytelling project highlights recent graduates excelling in their fields

UMKC alumni are pursuing their passions in Kansas City and beyond. Their stories debuted this spring with the new storytelling series, “Inspired Beginnings. Great Journeys.”

Featured graduates include Chloe David (B.M.E. ’16), a teacher inspiring students to explore music; George White Jr. (B.S. ’13), an engineer who makes time for mentoring and volunteering; Klassie Alcine (B.A. ’09, M.P.A. ’11), a political junkie who uses her skills to pursue social justice for all; and more.

To browse inspiring alumni stories, visit go.umkc.edu/alumni-stories.

Know someone who should be featured? Let us know! Contact us at mcom@umkc.edu.

Chloe David
(B.M.E. ’16)
Music Education

Klassie Alcine
(B.A. ’09, M.P.A. ’11)
Political Science, Criminal Justice and Criminology

George White Jr.
(B.S. ’13) Civil Engineering

Tiffany Tran
(B.B.A. ’14) Marketing

Dylan Burd
(B.A. ’14, M.A. ’16)
Education, English

Alvin Liow
(MBA ’15)
Entrepreneurship

“Engineering is an industry in which you can move around, try different things ... The opportunities are endless.”

― George White Jr.
(B.S. ’13) Civil Engineering
This year’s issue of Perspectives begins and ends with a simple question: What does the future hold?

The answer affects everyone, but especially children. When they grow up, what kind of world will they inherit? What will they see when they step out their front door?

Alumni shared their predictions through a survey that tackled topics including health, money, food, leisure and more.

Many think the world will be a better place. In 2050, people will live longer, homes will be more energy-efficient, even politics will be more respectful. Others were less optimistic: more technology but less human connection, greater wealth but only for an elite minority, longer lives but lower quality of life.

Expert UMKC alumni and faculty also weighed in. Their predictions ranged from the practical — better health technology, smaller homes and more home-grown food — to the fantastical — robots that perform surgery, mobile apps that detect disease, homes that are delivered in kits and much, much more.

In all those responses, one theme became quite clear: The future will bring advances and changes that few can imagine.

**SURVEY SAYS**
More than 800 alumni responded to our survey about the future. Here’s how those numbers break down.

**BY SCHOOL**
- 28% College of Arts and Sciences
- 19% Health Sciences (Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Nursing and Health Studies)
- 18% Henry W. Bloch School of Management
- 13% School of Education
- 11% School of Law
- 7% Conservatory of Music and Dance
- 3% School of Computing and Engineering
- 1% School of Biological Sciences

**BY AGE**
- 26% 60-69 years
- 21% 50-59 years
- 13% 40-49 years
- 13% 30-39 years
- 12% 70-79 years
- 11% 29 or younger
- 4% 80 or older
A cure for Alzheimer’s

its infancy, when a patient is 50, 40 or even 30 years old. “When it comes to Alzheimer’s, I really believe that the future is now,” Isaacson says. Isaacson’s oldest patient is 91 and his youngest is 25. So when is the best time to talk to your doctor? The earlier the better, he says, especially if you have a family member with Alzheimer’s.

“We can do is recognize the people at the highest risk, and make very specific, targeted changes in their life to reduce their risk,” Isaacson says. “That’s really the way things are going.”

Another reason to get tested early: Research suggests one in three cases of Alzheimer’s may be preventable. And new technology is making it easier than ever to diagnose.

Technology and Alzheimer’s

Most patients are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s through a series of questions and tests in their doctor’s office. Isaacson hopes that eventually, doctors will be able to raise the alarm about their patients’ cognitive function long before that person notices it themselves.

“I hope that one day we can give somebody an iPhone app and say, oh, this person is testing more slowly than they used to, or they’re taking longer to answer the phone, or they’re making more errors,” Isaacson says.

“What more to life is there than your mind?”
—Dr. Richard Isaacson, director of the Alzheimer’s Prevention Clinic, New York City

Some of this tech-enhanced testing is already in use. Alzheimer’s Universe, for instance, is a free website focusing on prevention. Visitors can use a webcam to track eye movements and determine the health of their visual memory. Another application allows users to play a matching game, but with a twist. “You think it’s like the memory game for kids, but it’s way more sophisticated than that,” Isaacson says. “We’re tracking how quickly the person is tapping the button, if it’s accurate, where they’re tapping the button — we’re doing all these fancy things on the back end.” The earlier people can be identified as being at risk for Alzheimer’s, the earlier experts like Isaacson can create a prevention plan tailored to their exact needs.

Finding “the cure”

The cure for Alzheimer’s won’t be a singular solution, Isaacson says. Instead, it will be a combination of drugs, vitamins, supplements and lifestyle changes.

In other words, says Isaacson, “There’s never going to be a magic pill or potion.” Doctors like Isaacson look at factors like body fat, genetics and scores on memory tests to determine the best treatment for each individual.

Isaacson’s personalized plans go much further than advice like, “eat healthier” or “do more puzzles.” He and his team have on hand on what specific types of foods should be added or subtracted from a diet; whether cardio or strength exercises will be more effective; which brain teasers will target the specific cognitive function that is faltering, etc. The keys to make the treatments as individual as the patients themselves. And those strategies are getting more advanced every day.

The textbook on Alzheimer’s prevention hasn’t been written yet. There’s maybe the first chapter or two, and then hopefully we can help write the rest,” Isaacson says. “It’s not a cure, but it’s a start.”

in the late 1990s, Faisal Khan, Ph.D., and Masud Chowdhury, Ph.D., competed against each other in Bangladesh’s televised national debate championship. Khan’s team won, but only Chowdhury says, because he didn’t compete in the final round.

More than two decades and 8,000 miles later, the two are still competing — not against each other, but against illnesses like cancer, heart disease and organ failure.

Khan and Chowdhury, both associate professors in the UMKC School of Computing and Engineering, form a biotechnology duo — with Khan specializing in energy harvesting, and Chowdhury in nanotechnology.

In simpler terms, the friends study how technology could save millions of lives.

Powering positive results

Picture this: Your blood pressure spikes unexpectedly. You feel nothing, but across town or across the country, your doctor gets a notification. Five minutes later, you’re scheduling an appointment.

That’s the vision Khan wants to make a reality, through a system of wires running from your brain to your chest. This radio network would monitor everything from your heart rate to your brain to your chest. This radio network would monitor everything from your heart rate to your brain.

Chowdhury’s research could produce similar results. A nano-sized sensor placed inside the body could alert your doctor to a clogged artery, a slow-acting pacemaker or a growing tumor. Then, a microscopic device would deliver drugs directly to the affected part of the body.

How would these devices be powered, you ask? Researchers are exploring several charging methods, but there’s one idea doctors will especially enjoy — a massage. “I came up with an idea to send energy through vibration, in the form of a neck massage or a foot massage,” Khan says. “The vibration energy could be transferred to electronics inside the body. Another hurdle: Making the devices MRI-compatible. If those two challenges can be overcome, Khan says, the possibilities are infinite.

Doctor robotics

Another breakthrough both Khan and Chowdhury predict: surgery performed by robotics. Chowdhury imagines a future in which a doctor in Kansas City could perform surgery on a patient in Bangladesh using robotic arms. Another scenario would allow a machine to make a razor-straight cut on a patient, removing the possibility for human error. But will doctors be cut out of the job? Not likely. “Robotics will make it efficient and smooth for the doctor, but the doctor will never be replaced,” Chowdhury says. “The level and mode of involvement will change, but ultimately, human involvement will be there.”

Life-saving technology

The research Khan and Chowdhury are working on has the potential to reach every corner of the medical field — from treating cancer to diagnosing simple infections. One of the three saved could very well be another member of that Bangladeshi debate team: a friend of Khan and Chowdhury’s in Houston who needs a kidney transplant.

“When it comes to Alzheimer’s, I really believe that the future is now,” Isaacson says. “That’s the vision Khan wants to make a reality, through a system of wires running from your brain to your chest. This radio network would monitor everything from your heart rate to your brain.”

When asked whether most surgeons will be performed by computers in 2055, most medical school graduates said no, while most computing and engineering graduates said yes.

“Technology and our bodies

SURVEY SAYS

More than a third of alumni polled said a cure for Alzheimer’s is one of the top breakthroughs we will see by 2050.

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“Technology and our bodies

SURVEY SAYS

More than a third of alumni polled said a cure for Alzheimer’s is one of the top breakthroughs we will see by 2050.
Financial experts Chris Longly (EMBA '13) and Latoya Goree agree on two strategies everyone should use to build their financial future:

- Establish a budget. Aim to spend 50 percent on necessities (rent, utilities, etc.), 30 percent on discretionary expenses (entertainment, clothing, etc.) and 20 percent on savings.
- Build an emergency fund. A good rule of thumb is 3-6 months of income or 6-9 months of living expenses.

The key to success, Longly says, is all about creating healthy habits. “It’s not how much you make, it’s how much you keep,” he says. “If you do a good job keeping more and managing your expenses, at the end of the day — no matter what — you will have more money in your pocket.”

For Goree, it’s all about discipline. “It’s going to be difficult if you’ve not had the experience of doing it,” she says. “If you can stick with it, you’ll be better off in the long run.”

For more specific advice, Longly and Goree created personalized plans for three alumni: A young educator who wants to buy a home, a couple thinking about having a baby and an educator who wants to buy a home, a couple thinking about having a baby.

Survey Says: Even our youngest respondents believe physical money will still be around in 2050, so don’t get rid of the piggy bank just yet.

Expert advice for every stage of life

Kirsten Brown (B.A. ‘12)
Occupation: High school principal
Financial Goals: Save as much as possible, purchase a condo in 18-24 months.

THE “BIG THING” FOR KIRSTEN
LB: A budget is critical for her. She is going to have to start somewhere with her savings.
CL: She’s young and time is on her side. Creating better money habits now will significantly change her life in the years to come.

ON FILING TAXES
LB: She needs to work with a tax professional to make sure she is claiming the right exemptions and deductions. That way, she can understand her refund and use it for the rest of the year.
CL: Contributing to tax-deferred accounts (like a 403(b), 401(k), IRA, etc.) will allow her to reduce her taxable income while saving for retirement. She should also consider contributing to a Health Savings Account (HSA).

ON BUYING A CONDO
LB: In the long-term, you’re building equity if you purchase a home. Although renting gives you flexibility to move whenever you want, at the end of the day, you don’t own anything.
CL: Start saving money now for a down payment. Putting down 20 percent or more will eliminate costly Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) and likely provide access to more attractive loan rates.

Karen Miazga-Blackwood (B.A. ’09) and Steve Blackwood
Occupations: Instructional coach in schools (Karen) and sales professional (Steve)
Financial Goals: Think ahead to retirement, pay off mortgage, plan for children

THE “BIG THING” FOR KAREN AND STEVE
LB: Budgeting is key for them, especially if Steve is in sales, because that means his income could fluctuate. If he has a base salary that doesn’t change, I would budget off of that. Then, the commission is gray.
CL: Interest can be your best friend or your worst enemy. When you’re young and you put away money, it grows. Debt works the same way. If you don’t pay it off, your interest gets out of control.

ON STARTING A FAMILY
LB: If they eventually want to have a child, they should start saving today. Of yesterday. Start an emergency fund first, then an additional baby fund later. Their budget has to be re-evaluated all the time.
CL: If they decide to have children, they should consider starting a 529 college saving plan after the child is born. These plans allow savings to grow tax-free if used for qualified education expenses in the future.

ON PAYING OFF A MORTGAGE
LB: If he prioritized early-on, it won’t be hard for him to catch up. It really depends how much effort he put in in his earlier days.
CL: He should definitely increase his mortgage payments or make extra payments. It would be unreal to go into retirement with a mortgage when you no longer have regular income.

ON PREPARING FOR RETIREMENT
LB: If he hasn’t put anything into an HSA, he should look into it now. The older you get, the more health expenses you’ll have, so he should prioritize that.
CL: He’ll soon be an empty nester, and it’s the perfect time to focus purely on saving for retirement. Contribute maximum amount to retirement accounts and invest excess cash in a diversified brokerage portfolio.

Chris Longly (EMBA ‘13), a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch, and Latoya Goree, director of the UMKC Office of Financial Literacy, serve as our financial gurus.
FUTURE OF HOMES

Meet the experts

In the heart of the Crossroads Arts District sits an understated brick building, nestled between an alley and event rental store. Step inside, however, and you are transported to the design mecca that is Studio Build. Sleek furniture, exposed brick and floor-to-ceiling bookcases welcome you to the space, as guys in jeans and glasses tap away on Macs.

Studio Build began in 2008, but one could argue it really began years earlier, when Jerad Foster and Ryan Deveney sat next to each other in their first architecture class at UMKC. Foster and Deveney continued to work together as they completed the five-year architecture program that begins at UMKC and ends at Kansas State University. Today, they work together — alongside fellow Roo Chris Penland and others — to design and build beautiful spaces across Kansas City.

To learn about the future of homes, we talked to these three architects, as well as Joy Swallow, Ph.D., department chair of UMKC’s Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design.

ON SMART HOMES

JF: A lot of our clients have decided to wait [on smart homes], because they see how fast technology is changing. They want to see what things are like in five years, because it’s probably going to be cheaper, and it might be a totally different system. We’re looking at it differently than we did even two or three years ago. It’s changing that fast.

RD: As construction costs get higher, people are going to try to get the footprint of their homes smaller and smaller. People aren’t quite ready to concede square footage to allow for the integration of green technology. Until the cost of the technology comes down, I think a “prep for the future” mentality will continue. If energy costs start to soar and the return on investment comes down, I think people will jump on board quickly.

JS: Tiny homes are like a mobile home on wheels. It just has wheels and looks more traditional. There’s a place for tiny houses, but I think there are neighborhoods that would balk at them a bit. Now, modular homes, they can take all kinds of different figurations. In fact, we have one of the first ones here in Kansas City on Main. It came in on a crane and everything. It’s still costly, but I think the cost will go down with technology.

ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING

JF: The technology is adapting enough to where it’s becoming more affordable. Five, 10 years ago, some of this stuff was just too expensive. And that goes along with the smaller size. It’s much more green or efficient to not heat and cool a huge house.

RD: As construction costs get higher, people are going to try to get the footprint of their homes smaller and smaller. People aren’t quite ready to concede square footage to allow for the integration of green technology. Until the cost of the technology comes down, I think a “prep for the future” mentality will continue. If energy costs start to soar and the return on investment comes down, I think people will jump on board quickly.

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ON INNOVATIVE WAYS TO BUILD

JF: I think the biggest challenge for housing going forward is probably going to be the labor force. We have an impossible time hiring people right now. It’s going to force panels to have wind power — we’re already seeing that with our appliances. I just see it getting better and better.

JS: There are still going to be guys and gals on the site, strapping this thing together, but it’s going to be like giant IKEA kits. It’s the interaction of how these components come together that the person on the site will have to accomplish. Will the public accept that? That’s a big question.

ON TINY HOMES

JF: From what we’ve found, if you’re trying to live in the city and connect to utilities, tiny homes are really not cost effective. The price and the economic standpoint is very intriguing to people, but I think when you take away the TV shows and the cameras, the logistics of what they actually cost is very skewed. It could make sense for people who want to be off the grid or live in more rural areas, but any time you’re trying to deal with cities, it just kind of kills the efficiency.

“Tink in the next 10 or 20 years, houses are going to look completely different.”

–Chris Penland, Studio Build

ON SMALLER, CITY LIVING

JF: A lot of people — specifically younger people — are trying to stay close to the city. We get very few people wanting to build houses outside of the I-435 loop.

CP: There are some really cool advancements coming out in our fields. It’s been concrete, wood, glass for hundreds of years, so it’s cool to see where it’s going to go. I think in the next 10 or 20 years, houses are going to look completely different.

JS: The Europeans are way ahead of us. We’re going to have solar panels, we’re going to have wind power — we’re already seeing that with our appliances. I just see it getting better and better.

One of Studio Build’s homes in Kansas City, Missouri, just south of Brush Creek.

ON SMART HOMES

JF: A lot of our clients have decided to wait [on smart homes], because they see how fast technology is changing. They want to see what things are like in five years, because it’s probably going to be cheaper, and it might be a totally different system. We’re looking at it differently than we did even two or three years ago. It’s changing that fast.

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RD: I think tiny homes are definitely a fad. The idea as a whole has great merit, it’s just really tough to execute for what people are willing to spend. We’ve had numerous inquiries from people wanting to build one, but nobody has had an appropriate budget to do it right in our eyes, unless they are capable of self-performing most of the construction.

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RD: I think tiny homes are definitely a fad. The idea as a whole has great merit, it’s just really tough to execute for what people are willing to spend. We’ve had numerous inquiries from people wanting to build one, but nobody has had an appropriate budget to do it right in our eyes, unless they are capable of self-performing most of the construction.

JS: Tiny homes are like a mobile home on wheels. It just has wheels and looks more traditional. There’s a place for tiny houses, but I think there are neighborhoods that would balk at them a bit. Now, modular homes, they can take all kinds of different figurations. In fact, we have one of the first ones here in Kansas City on Main. It came in on a crane and everything. It’s still costly, but I think the cost will go down with technology.
Neil Rudisill (B.S.N. ’16) and his partner Lisa Hummel (pictured above) operate a thriving urban farm in Kansas City, Missouri. But only if believers like Rudisill can take it simultaneously for neighborhood health, is to do for your own personal health, and to himself. With a bee sting on his nose — an occupational hazard for urban farmers. Lisa Hummel, represent a growing population — a half-acre farm that brings in $12,000 a year.

“Urban agriculture challenges the old divide between the city being one thing and agriculture and farmland another.” — Jacob Wagner, director of urban studies, UMKC Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design

“Teachers...show her grandchildren, ‘This is a garden, and it’s okay to get dirty.’” — Newman

SURVEY SAYS
Alumni predictions ranged from the realistic — artificially raised meat, bees replaced by drones, farms in climate-controlled districts — to the realistic — hydroponics, aquaponics and rooftop gardens.

Neil Rudisill (B.S.N. ’16) and his partner Lisa Hummel (pictured above) operate a thriving urban farm in Kansas City, Missouri. At right, Rudisill lays tarp underneath the farm’s high tunnel. (Photo courtesy of Lisa Hummel)
Making education accessible to everyone

BY PATRICIA O’DELL

hen asked in our survey which breakthrough they would most like to see by 2050, many alumni gave the same answer: quality education for all. And that’s not just School of Education graduates talking — alumni from schools across campus said the same thing. As one graduate put it: “I would like to see everyone receive the best possible education. I currently pay to send my granddaughter to private school. The quality of education that she is receiving should be the standard, not the exception. It is my hope that UMKC, as an educational institution, will promote and share this dream.”

Interim Chancellor and Provost Barbara A. Bichelmeyer does share the dream of quality education for all. In fact, she spends a good part of her day talking about it. We sat down with Bichelmeyer to talk about the future of education and what’s next for UMKC.

Why do you say that higher education is in “its most significant transformational moment since its creation?”

For generations, colleges were gatekeepers, ensuring that only those deemed worthy got access to higher learning. Today, we have evolved into bridge-builders, bringing knowledge to everyone, in a variety of ways that make it possible for everyone to access it. Those of us working in public institutions have an awesome responsibility to ensure that our entire community has equal access to knowledge. The bridges we build must reach across the many divides in our society — racial, philosophical, economic, language and cultural.

How is the “traditional” college experience changing?

Job-specific training programs that don’t confer degrees are becoming more popular. The attraction is undeniable — you spend less than four years learning a trade and typically finish with less debt than someone earning a bachelor’s degree. The nature of education and learning is very different now as well. The evolution of knowledge is so rapid. The demands of the workplace are evolving just as fast. Lifelong education is becoming the new norm. So we have to build strong and effective bridges to people at every stage of their lives.

What is the value of a four-year college degree?

A true college or university degree is more than just job training. We educate future citizens by providing a core curriculum that preserves and passes on our culture and values to the next generation. Our graduates are engineers who appreciate great literature, physicians who attend and support symphony and jazz performances, entrepreneurs who are informed voters and involved citizens. Their lives are much richer and more rewarding as a result of their liberal arts education, and the value to society is immeasurable. That’s something that a programming boot camp simply cannot provide.

As technology evolves, why are traditional brick-and-mortar campuses still important?

The heart of an educational experience is to engage with other people in service of one’s own growth and development. That will always be most fully done when we are together, face-to-face, asking difficult questions and having challenging conversations. Technology and online programs allow us to get pieces of that, but not the full experience.

Online education isn’t, by definition, awful or great, and being in the classroom isn’t awful or great. It’s what happens in those spaces and formats that determines the quality of the education.

What is the value of a liberal arts education?

Liberal arts and sciences degrees teach students how to learn. We are preparing people not just for a job, but for a career; preparing them not just to make a living, but to live a life. That’s what liberal arts and sciences do better than any other workforce training does. It teaches people how to think critically, how to communicate with each other, how to consider the place of an individual in society, how to be creative, how to have a difficult conversation in which you might disagree. All of these are really important components of the human experience that are advanced through the liberal arts and sciences.

For UMKC, specifically, what do you think the future holds? What can alumni expect to see in the next decades?

What we are trying to create is a university where students have a more personalized learning experience and much more empowerment in their education. We will do better in supporting our faculty for growth opportunities — helping them learn how to teach and do research in this new space higher education is becoming. Learning is still, and always will be, a human enterprise. We have to find our best ways to support people in that.

When you look at these challenges, is it energizing and exciting, or daunting and exhausting?

Energizing and exciting. I built my career in telecommunications and tech, and I could see that tech was going to change the world, and it was certainly going to change education. The question is: How can we leverage new technologies to create more personal learning experiences for students? Managing this change is sometimes daunting, but we have great people at UMKC — a phenomenal faculty, staff and leadership team, and a community that wants us to be the best we can be for our students. That commitment from the leaders in our region is exciting and humbling. 

Interim Chancellor and Provost Barbara A. Bichelmeyer in the state-of-the-art Bloch Executive Hall for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.
BOUNDELESS INSPIRATION

The annual UMKC Alumni Awards celebration on April 20 honored distinguished alumni while supporting the next generation of Roos.

ALUMNA OF THE YEAR
Esther L. George
EMBA ’00 · Weatherby Lake, MO

As president and chief executive officer for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, George is a world-renowned expert on economic issues. Beyond her national leadership in shaping monetary policy, George is also known globally for her expertise. She hosts the annual Jackson Hole Economic Symposium and has participated in the Bank for International Settlements Financial Stability Institute programs in several countries.

George generously lends her time to UMKC by giving presentations at the Henry W. Bloch School of Management and inviting students to visit the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City so they can engage with economists and other professionals. She is currently a UMKC Trustee and has served on the Bloch Advisory Council. In 2017, she was appointed to the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation board of trustees.

MORE ABOUT ESTHER: She is the first woman to serve as president and chief executive officer of the Kansas City branch of the bank.

DEFYING THE ODDS AWARD
Troy L. Nash
J.D. ’97, M.A. ’96, M.A. ’11, MBA ’13 · Kansas City, MO

Growing up in a single-parent home on public assistance, Nash worked odd jobs to help his mother make ends meet. The family bounced from house to house, forcing him to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. With the help of scholarships and loans, he earned an undergraduate degree from Wesley College and then a J.D. from UMKC. He went on to earn an M.A. in economics, an M.A. in political science and an MBA from UMKC, as well as a doctorate degree in education from St. Louis University. In 2014, Nash became the first African-American in Kansas City history to become principal and shareholder in a Top 10 commercial real estate firm. He is currently managing director and principal at Newmark Grubb Zimmer.

MORE ABOUT TROY: Mentors have played a large role in Nash’s adult life — he believes the universe brings people into your life at just the right time. Nash says three people, specifically, have been outstanding mentors to him: Rosemary Lowa, Hugh Zimmer and Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II.

BILL FRENCH ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD
Bob Regnier
MBA ’78 · Leawood, KS

Founder, president and CEO of the Bank of Blue Valley, Regnier has been a long-time volunteer for UMKC, dating back to his service on the Bloch Alumni Association Board from 1990-96. He has served on the School’s Finance Advisory Board and, in 2009, he and his wife, Ann, stepped into campus-wide volunteer roles as co-chairs of the university’s capital campaign, helping UMKC raise more than $250 million. In 2016, he became a member of the UMKC Foundation board of directors. In addition to Regnier’s personal service, the Regnier Family Foundation has supported the Bloch School and the university in countless ways, including founding and naming the UMKC institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation’s signature program, the Regnier Family Foundation’s Venture Creation Challenge.

MORE ABOUT BOB: He has been in the banking profession for more than 45 years and attributes his work ethic to lessons he learned from his father.

SPOTLIGHT AWARD
Hermon Mehari
B.M. ’10 · Kansas City, MO

Mehari’s career has put the UMKC jazz program on the global and national stages, making him a world-wide ambassador for Kansas City. He has won countless accolades, including first place in the national trumpet competition for jazz, first place in the Carmen Caruso International Trumpet Competition, second place in the International Trumpet Guild Competition in Australia and semi-finalist in the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition and the Charlotte Street Grant awards. While he was a student at UMKC, Mehari formed the award-winning ensemble Diverse. The group’s debut album made the Top 40 on the jazzfolk radio charts. He continues to perform professionally around the world. One of his nominators notes that, “Next to Bobby Watson, Hermon Mehari has brought the most attention to UMKC and the KC jazz scene in recent history.”

MORE ABOUT HERMON: Mehari fell in love with jazz after listening to “Kind of Blue” by Miles Davis, one of the most iconic jazz records of all time. Since then, Mehari has released numerous records of his own. In March 2017, he released “Blue,” his first album serving as band leader.

LEGACY AWARD
Cisetti-Orozco-Madden Family

The Cisetti-Orozco-Madden family’s Roo roots began with Josephine Cisetti, who graduated from the University of Kansas City in 1945. Many Roos would follow: Josephine (Mannino) Cisetti (M.A. ’45), Roberto Orozco (Attended), Rev. Joseph Cisetti (B.A. ’83), John Cisetti (B.B.A. ’78, M.A. ’79, Ed.S. ’85), Veronica (Orozco) Cisetti (B.S. ’77), Steven R. Cisetti (Attended), Catherine Cisetti (Currently enrolled, Ed.S.), Mary (Cisetti) Patonai (B.B.A. ’12), Nicolas Patonai (B.A. ’13, M.D. ’14), Rebecca (Orozco) Poidexter (B.B.A. ’80), Jonathan Poidexter (B.B.A. ’10), David Poidexter (B.B.A. ’13), David Orozco (B.S.C.E. ’84), Celia (Orozco) Squires (B.S. ’86), Dennis Squires (B.B.A. ’86), Amanda Squires (Attended), Carolinexa Squires (Attended), Patrick Madden (B.A. ’95), Gloria (Orozco) Madden (Attended), Dennis Madden (B.A. ’70), Robin Madden (Attended), Catherine Viele (Attended) and Matthew G. Madden (M.A. ’67). Marie E. (Beth) Madden (J.D. ’92), Brian J. Madden (J.D. ’92).

Roo Love Connections
These Roos met their future spouse while studying at UMKC: John and Veronica Cisetti, Nicholas and Mary Patonai, Dennis and Celia Squires, Patrick and Gloria Madden, Dennis and Robin Madden, Brian and Beth Madden.

Alumni news and views

MORE ABOUT TROY: Troy Nash, B.A. ’85 · Kansas City, MO

MORE ABOUT ROO: Pictured: Josephine Cisetti

MORE ABOUT HERMON: Hermon Mehari, B.M. ’10 · Kansas City, MO

MORE ABOUT BOB: Bob Regnier, MBA ’78 · Leawood, KS

MORE ABOUT ROO: Pictured: Josephine Cisetti

MORE ABOUT RENEE: Renee Johnson, B.A. ’88 · Kansas City, MO

MORE ABOUT ESTHER: Esther L. George, EMBA ’00 · Weatherby Lake, MO
Alumni Awards Luncheon 2017

CLASS NOTES

2010s
Jeff Blackford (D.D. ’16, Education) was named superintendent at Nodaway-Holt in Maryville, Missouri.

Kristie Cross (B.A. ’12, Arts and Sciences) joined North Central Missouri College in Benton as the Director of Admissions.

Sydney Crammins (B.S.N. ’15, Nursing) of Clay Center, Kansas, was selected by the WAC senior woman administrators to represent the WAC for the 2016 NCAA Woman of the Year award.

Courtney Fonrichi (B.A. ’15, Biological Sciences) of Portland, Oregon, qualified for the Olympic Trials and then for the final race at the 2017 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Adam Fontana (D.M.A. ’16, Conservatory) was appointed assistant professor of music and director of instrumental music at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas.

Daniel J. Garlow (M.D. ’11, Medicine) was elected chief of staff at Cloud County Health Center in Concordia, Kansas.

Benjamin Grohman (J.D. ’16, Law) was hired as a lawyer at Overland Park, Kansas-based Hevey Williams LLP.

Suzanne R. Hendrix-Case (D.M.A. ’11, Conservatory) joined Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, as an assistant professor of music.

Steve Lewis (M.M. ’12, Conservatory) was named music director of the Medical Arts Symphony of Kansas City. Lewis is also the music director of the Midwest Chamber Ensemble.

Vu Nguyen (B.A. ’12, Arts and Sciences), co-founder of MADE Urban Apparel, opened the brand’s first retail shop in Kansas City, Missouri.

Andrés Salguero (D.M.A. ’11, Conservatory) of Washington, D.C., won a Latin Grammy for Best Children’s Album. Salguero performs as 123 Andrés and was honored for his record Arriba Ariba. While studying at UMKC, Salguero taught students as part of the Musical Bridges program at the Conservatory.

Travis Tanaka (D.D.S. ’16, Dentistry) opened Seneca Family Dentistry in Wichita, Kansas.

2000s
Danielle Carron (M.D. ’07, Medicine) became a medical partner of Saint Francis Healthcare Systems in Farmington, Missouri. Carron specializes in family medicine and will join Farmington Medical Associates.

Kiran Chelturi (M.S. ’07, Arts and Sciences), founder of Chelsoft Solutions in Olathe, Kansas, announced that the organization was named number seven on Ingram’s 100 Fastest-Growing Companies list for 2016.

Ramin Cherfaf (M.B.A. ’03, Management) will become the CEO of McGownCordon Construction in Kansas City, Missouri. Cherfaf currently serves as the firm’s COO and will assume the role of CEO on Jan. 1, 2018. In August, he became president of the UMKC Alumni Association.

Chandra Clark (B.A. ’06, Arts and Sciences) received the 2016 Athena Young Professionals Leadership Award. Clark is the manager of external partnerships for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City.

Bruce Copeland (M.A. ’01, Education) became a member of the board at BioKansas. Copeland is the director of business development at Cardinal Health Regulatory Sciences in Overland Park, Kansas.

Brian D. Corn (M.B.A. ’16, Management) of Lenexa, Kansas, joined Athlete Network as CTO, where he will lead all product development and engineering.

Gregory T. Cotton (J.D. ’00, Law) joined PG LLC as partner and president to work on the development of the Gateway Sports Village. Cotton is the former COO and general counsel for Sporting Kansas City.

David K. Dunning (M.P.A. ’02, Management) is the new director of the Memphis VA Medical Center. Dunning was formerly commander of an Army medical center in Hawaii.

Jennifer Friend (Ph.D. ’04, Graduate Studies) was named dean of the College of Health and Human Services at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri.

Esther George (EMBA ’00, Management) joined the Kraftmann Foundation Board. George is the 2017 UMKC Alumna of the Year and the president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

Alyssa Greedy (Pharm.D. ’06, Pharmacy) was recognized by Continental Who’s Who as a Pinnacle Professional in the field of retail. Greedy is a pharmacy manager at a Walgreens in Kansas City, Missouri. She has also been recognized by the National Association of Professional Women as a VIP Woman of the Year.

David Gohn (J.D. ’00, Law) was named president and CEO of West Plains Bank in West Plains, Missouri.

Continued on next page
For the past three years, he has been named as a Rising Star by Super Lawyers.

Shateel Higbee (M.D. ’09, Medicine) joined Conemaugh Health System as a medical oncologist in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

Sara Jahne (Ph.D. ’06, Education) of Kansas City, Missouri, received the Excellence in Leadership Award at the Institute of Food Technologists Student Association Conference. Jahne is a principal investigator in the Institute for Biobehavioral Health Research and director of the Center for Fire, Rescue and EMS Research at the National Development and Research Institutes, Inc.

John Owen (M.S. ’03, Management of Kansas City, Missouri, joined Executive AirShare as CFO. Previously, he served as vice president of EFL Associates.


Sarah Littleton Schiltz (M.S. ’07, Management) was named partner at MarksNelson LLC in Kansas City, Missouri. She is the youngest woman in the history of the firm to be named partner.

Damin Thornman (J.D. ’04, Law) was named vice president and chief innovation officer at Miami Dade College in Florida. Previously, he served as director of the White House Social Innovation Fund.

Jodie Lin (M.M. ’92, Conservatory) was selected as the 2017 recipient of the Honor Administrator Award, presented by the Kansas Music Educators Association for her work in Kansas City, Kansas public schools.

Greg Manis (B.A. ’90, Management) was appointed to the position of corporate director of communications at MGF. Previously, Manis served as director of client engagement for VML.

Damon Mitchell (B.A. ’97, Arts & Sciences) was named chief deputy attorney for Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Vickie S. Murillo (M.A. ’97, Education) was named the next superintendent of Lawrence Public Schools in Kansas.

Kevin Tuttle (J.D. ’06, Law) was elected partner at Spencer Fane Law Firm in Kansas City, Missouri. Tuttle provides intellectual property counsel.
SPOTTED

Edie McClurg (B.A. ’67) receives her honorary doctorate at the May 2017 Commencement from Provost and now-Interim Chancellor Barbara A. Bichelmeyer and Wayne Vaught, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. McClurg is a successful comedian, actress and singer who has performed in more than 90 films and 55 television episodes, including The Richard Pryor Show, Ferris Bueller’s Day Off, Planes Trains & Automobiles, The Little Mermaid and Frozen. Read more about the 2017 honorary doctorate recipients at go.umkc.edu/honorary-doctorates-2017.

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  Cuba and the Caribbean
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- **European Serenade**
  Rome to Venice
  May 16–25, 2018

- **Isles of Enchantment**
  London to Dublin
  June 7–18, 2018

- **Majestic Frontiers of Alaska**
  Alaska and Canada
  August 16–27, 2018

- **Ancient Vignettes**
  Barcelona to Athens
  October 3–14, 2018

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