

# Perspectives

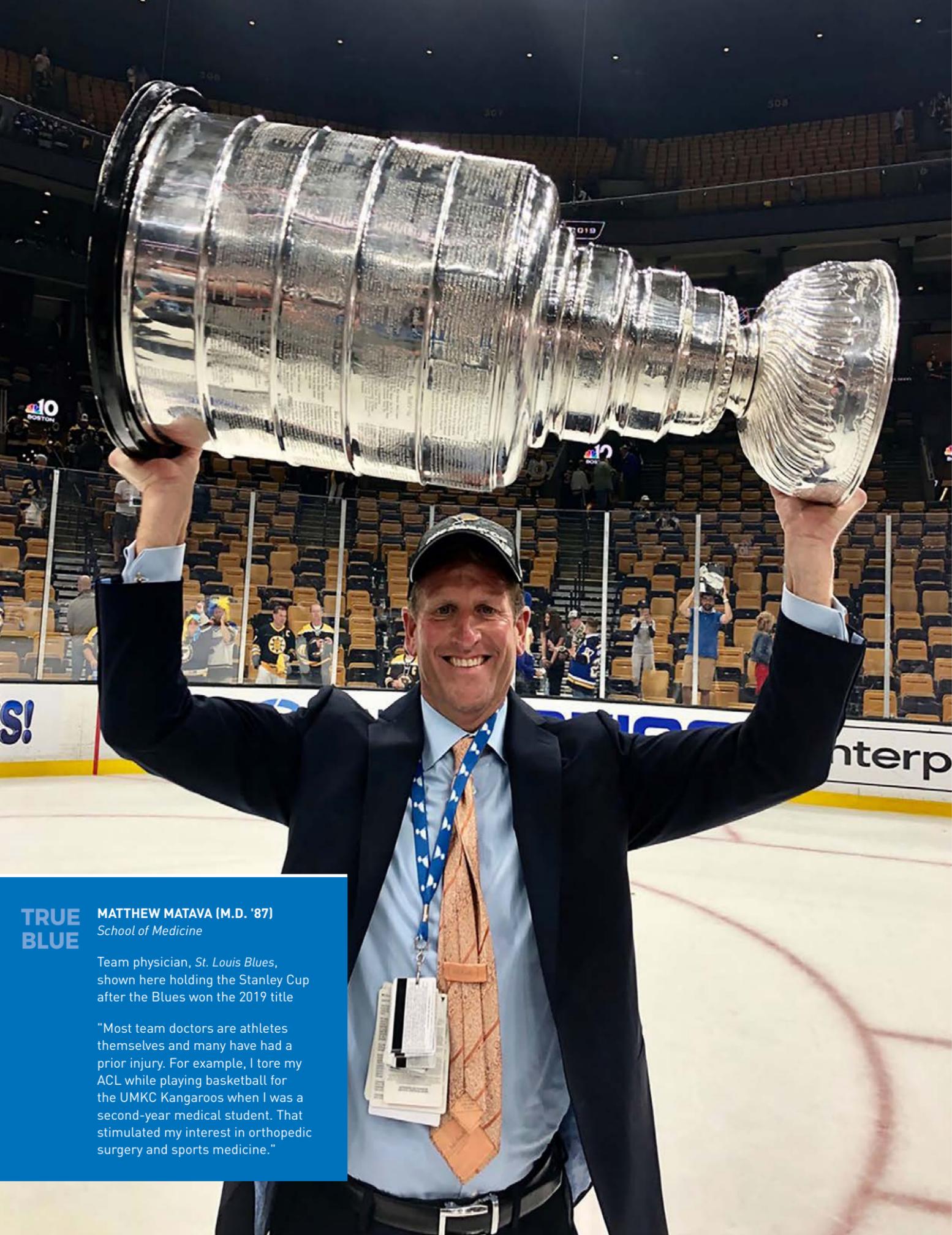
FALL 2019

The University of Missouri-Kansas City alumni magazine



## True Blue

The many colorful ways alumni are sharing their gifts with the world.



**TRUE BLUE**

**MATTHEW MATAVA (M.D. '87)**  
*School of Medicine*

Team physician, *St. Louis Blues*, shown here holding the Stanley Cup after the Blues won the 2019 title

"Most team doctors are athletes themselves and many have had a prior injury. For example, I tore my ACL while playing basketball for the UMKC Kangaroos when I was a second-year medical student. That stimulated my interest in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine."

**INSIDE**



18



20



22

**NEWS & UPDATES**

- 3 **Your magazine, your voice**  
Tell us what you think in our Perspectives reader survey
- 4 **At a glance: A year at UMKC**  
A lot has happened at UMKC since the last issue of Perspectives

**COVER STORY**

- 6 **True Blue**  
The many colorful ways alumni are sharing their gifts with the world

**FEATURES**

- 8 **Containing excitement**  
Business alumna founded the Iron District, an innovative dining and retail court made of shipping containers
- 10 **The couple that rules together, stays together**  
Law graduates navigate work and love — at home, at work and on television
- 13 **A tale of two talents**  
Dentistry graduate discovers his gift for smiles — from the artist's chair to the orthodontist's office
- 16 **Destined to fly**  
Alumna takes her math skills to the skies as a competitive hot air balloonist
- 17 **Health, in 240 characters or less**  
Using social media to bring health care to a wider audience
- 18 **More than a music class**  
One man's determination to bring music to Kansas City's youth
- 20 **A new way to wellness**  
Alumna uses diverse background to help people heal from the inside out
- 22 **Undercover rock star**  
Lifelong musician finds a new mission helping amputees

**ALUMNI NEWS**

- 24 **2019 Alumni Award winners**
- 26 **Class notes**

**Get Perspectives online**  
 Visit [perspectives.umkc.edu](http://perspectives.umkc.edu) to read an online version of the magazine and share your favorite articles with friends and family!

**ON THE COVER**

(Left to right) Micah Starr, Ronn Newton, Monica Cantu and Chiafei Lin represent just some of the diverse interests our UMKC alumni have chosen to pursue in their careers. Meet more of our True Blue Roos on page 6.

# Perspectives

Fall 2019 | Vol. 29

Perspectives is published for alumni and friends of the University of Missouri-Kansas City by the UMKC Office of External Relations and Constituent Engagement: 300B Administrative Center 5115 Oak St. Kansas City, MO 64112 816-235-1561 alumni@umkc.edu umkcalumni.com

**Managing Editor**  
Lindsey Mayfield

**Editor**  
Kathryn Houston

**Art Directors**  
Sarah Richardson  
Samantha Wise

**Writers**  
Julie Whitsitt  
Stacy Downs  
Kelsey Haynes  
Bridget Koan  
Patricia O'Dell  
Hallie Spencer

**Photographer**  
Brandon Parigo

**Executive Editors**  
Lisa Baronio  
*President, UMKC Foundation and UMKC Chief Advancement Officer*

Curtis J. Crespino  
*Vice Chancellor, External Relations and Constituent Engagement*

Anne Hartung Spenner  
*Vice Chancellor, Strategic Marketing and Communications*

Visit us online at [perspectives.umkc.edu](http://perspectives.umkc.edu).

UMKC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.



MAG 18123479

## Where has your UMKC experience taken you?

As I look over the great number of talented alumni in this issue of Perspectives, what strikes me is the many, many places their UMKC experiences have taken them.

In this issue, you'll meet alumni who have started small (and large!) businesses, dedicated their careers to helping others, made incredible discoveries, performed on world-class stages and more. Their work has taken them to schools and businesses just down the road from campus to theaters and institutes around the globe.

But perhaps even more impressive than those accomplishments is the way our UMKC alumni have expertly blended their unique abilities with their UMKC degrees to create truly colorful lives. We met a technical writer who doubles as an orchestra conductor, a marketing professional who moonlights in calligraphy, a nonprofit coordinator who spends his weekends as a rock band guitarist and so many more.

Their passions and pursuits may be varied, but what they all have in common are the skills and experiences they gained at UMKC. The alumni you'll find in this issue are living proof that UMKC grads are truly everywhere, and a UMKC degree can carry you anywhere you care to go.

We'd love to hear where life has taken you since we last saw you at UMKC. Drop us a line at [perspectives@umkc.edu](mailto:perspectives@umkc.edu), or update your alumni profile at [umkcalumni.com/advantage](http://umkcalumni.com/advantage).

I'm also happy to welcome a new Roo to our UMKC family, Lisa Baronio. Lisa joined UMKC in June as chief advancement officer and president of the UMKC Foundation. She has already made a great impact on UMKC and the lives of our students.

Thank you for picking up this issue of Perspectives and for all the ways you continue to serve UMKC. You are an integral part of our strong, vibrant UMKC community, and we look forward to an even stronger relationship moving forward.

Go Roos!

Curtis J. Crespino

Vice Chancellor of External Relations and Constituent Engagement



## Your magazine, your voice

Tell us what you think in our Perspectives reader survey

*Perspectives* is your alumni magazine, created to help you stay connected to your alma mater and your community of alumni, now more than 127,000 strong!

We're always looking for ways to better serve you. Would you take five minutes to give us your opinion on Perspectives? Give us your thoughts on which stories you like, when and where you like to read the magazine, what you'd like to see in next year's issue and more.

You can also contact us any time at [perspectives@umkc.edu](mailto:perspectives@umkc.edu) with opinions, story ideas or updates to your information. We're always happy to hear from you!

**Take the survey:**  
[go.umkc.edu/perspectives-survey](http://go.umkc.edu/perspectives-survey)

# At a glance: A year at UMKC

A lot has happened at UMKC since the last issue of Perspectives arrived. Here are a few of the highlights we're most proud of from the 2018-19 school year (and beyond!).

2018

## SEPTEMBER

The School of Computing and Engineering breaks ground on its new research and laboratory building, the Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise and Research Center, set to open in Fall 2020. The building will provide leading research and development technologies to both the UMKC campus and the Kansas City community at large.

## NOVEMBER

UMKC partners with KC Scholars to announce \$20 million in new scholarships for local high school students. The additional funds will help 400 low-to-modest-income students attend college over the next nine years.

2019



## FEBRUARY

UMKC launches a new marketing campaign showing Roos' impact on Kansas City and beyond. The new look is on billboards, downtown streetcar stops, digital ads, T-shirts, bumper stickers and elsewhere throughout the Kansas City area.



## APRIL

Chancellor Mauli Agrawal reveals five signature initiatives for the university at his investiture ceremony, all centered on the idea of creating a "community of excellence." The five initiatives focus on student success, research, professional education, healthy communities and building pride.



## MAY

The UMKC Enactus team places fourth in the country at the 2019 Enactus United States National Championship. Enactus is an international nonprofit organization that encourages students to use entrepreneurship to help people in need.



## AUGUST

UMKC becomes the first campus in the U.S. to install CityPost, a digital bulletin board system that shares alerts, events and resources with campus visitors.



## DECEMBER

Athletic director Brandon Martin begins his tenure at UMKC after a national search. Martin, who most recently served as athletic director for California State University, says his goal is to rally even more support around UMKC's Division I athletics teams.

## JANUARY

The Conservatory announces its plans to build a new home directly adjacent to the existing Olson Performing Arts Center, facing Volker Boulevard and creating a dramatic new "front door" to campus.



## MARCH

Several big-name guests visit campus: Former first lady Laura Bush and her daughter, Barbara Pierce Bush, headlined the Starr Women's Hall of Fame induction event, and Sarah McBride, National Press Secretary for the Human Rights Campaign, was the featured speaker at the UMKC Pride Breakfast.



## JUNE

UMKC Athletics reveals a new logo as part of its rebrand as "Kansas City Athletics," featuring a modern twist on the "fighting kangaroo" image from UMKC history.

## JULY & AUGUST

The Sunderland Foundation commits \$15 million to UMKC campus renovations and construction. Additionally, the Marion and Henry Bloch Family Foundation donates \$21 million to the UMKC Foundation to support Bloch School programming, improvements to Bloch Heritage Hall and support of RooStrong, the university's new program for increasing student retention, six-year graduation rates and career outcomes.

 To read more about these stories, visit [perspectives.umkc.edu](https://perspectives.umkc.edu).

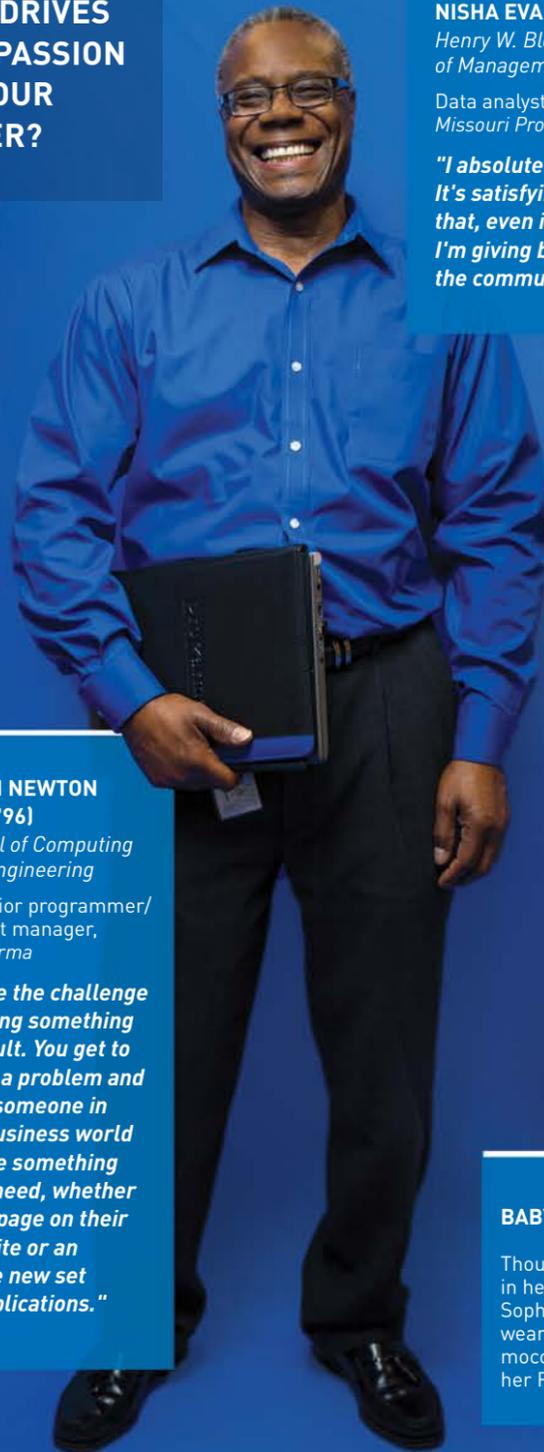
# True Blue

The many colorful ways alumni are sharing their gifts with the world

This issue began as a way to highlight some of the many interesting careers UMKC alumni have embarked upon. Spend even a few minutes with our alumni, though, and it's impossible not to notice something much deeper than their careers. What comes to the surface almost immediately are their passions and the many unique ways they're sharing them with the world.

From food trucks to hot air balloons to the orthodontist's chair, the following pages are filled with stories of alumni using the skills and smarts they gained at UMKC to do some amazing things. They represent just a fraction of our TRUE BLUE alumni who are sharing their true colors in their communities.

## WHAT DRIVES YOUR PASSION FOR YOUR CAREER?



### RONN NEWTON (B.A. '96)

School of Computing and Engineering

IT senior programmer/project manager, ProKarma

*"I love the challenge of doing something difficult. You get to solve a problem and help someone in the business world create something they need, whether it's a page on their website or an entire new set of applications."*

### NISHA EVANS (M.A. '15)

Henry W. Bloch School of Management

Data analyst, Jackson County, Missouri Prosecutor's Office

*"I absolutely love my job. It's satisfying to know that, even if indirectly, I'm giving back to the community."*



### BABY SOPHIA EVANS

Though not established in her career just yet, Sophia made sure to wear her UMKC-gold moccasins to show her Roo spirit!

### ALEX EVANS (M.A. '17)

School of Education

Educational Program Associate, UMKC High School/College Dual Credit Partnership

*"When I first started my degree at UMKC, I took a problem solving course. That experience taught me a lot about education and beyond — how people find solutions and the wide variety of ways they do it."*

### MONICA CANTU (B.S.N. '11)

School of Nursing and Health Studies

Registered nurse, University of Kansas Medical Center

*"It sounds cheesy, but I wanted to make a difference with my work. I came from a smaller town, and there's just so much culture at UMKC. I loved the diversity. I learned how to interact with all kinds of people. That's really important for nursing."*



### CHIAFEI LIN (D.M.A. '13)

Conservatory

Acting assistant concertmaster, Kansas City Symphony

*"When I was a little girl, I wanted to be the best violinist in the world. But it's so competitive — it's not always easy to find a job doing something you love. I'm really grateful. I just love making music."*

### MICAH STARR (B.A. '15)

College of Arts and Sciences

Business development manager, VMLY&R

*"The people are my favorite thing about my job. The work is one thing, but what lasts are relationships, and I really love that."*





# Containing excitement

**Business alumna founded the Iron District, an innovative dining and retail court made of shipping containers**

BY STACY DOWNS

Big things come in small packages. Rachel Kennedy Cuevas' new business development is proof of the proverb.

Cuevas (B.B.A. '98) is the brains behind Iron District, a new restaurant-retail destination made of 18 shipping containers in an industrial neighborhood at 16th and Iron in ever-growing downtown North Kansas City. The container park is a rare hybrid of two popular fast-casual dining concepts: food trucks and food halls.

Cuevas takes a small group on a tour of the containers, where red, green, yellow and blue boxes — some double-stacked — form a rectangle where picnic tables are arranged inside the center for communal eating.

"There's not much like this in the U.S. except in Las Vegas," Cuevas says. "And the businesses there are mostly bigger brands."

The Iron District containers — including one with a rooftop bar — offers plenty of home-grown eating and beverage options to choose from: vegan, ice cream, coffee and even an avocado bar. And it's her own Cuban fusion restaurant, Plantain District — originally a food truck — that led to the Iron District in the first place.

Cuevas founded Plantain District after eating a Cuban sandwich with her husband, Yvan Cuevas (B.B.A. '98, MBA '00), who had lived in Cuba. The two met while they were students at the Bloch School of Management. After taking a few bites, she had a revelation: "I can make something better."

"The food truck thrived because I had the business education and hired chefs to do the cooking — a recipe for success," Cuevas says. "UMKC, through the Bloch School, gave me the business background, and that's why I'm now a developer working with other entrepreneurs."

After its creation in 2014, Plantain District motored along swiftly, catering at food truck rallies, corporate events and weddings. But the nature of the business made Cuevas anxious: a livelihood based on an expensive kitchen that could be sidelined by a flat tire.

Though her fears never played out, they led to the Iron District concept. The size of shipping containers are roughly the same dimensions as food trucks and don't include the threat of engine failure. She pitched the concept to North Kansas City leaders and was greeted with enthusiasm.

"It means collaborating with others," Cuevas says. "It means fostering a community, which is one of my favorite parts of business."

After more than two years of working on the container park, Iron District finally opened in October 2019. Vivid art murals greet customers from the sides of the containers, along with a diversity of culinary options. Cuevas fervently talks about future plans, including adding walkways between containers.

Cuevas considers Iron District a proof-of-concept incubator for startups. The restaurants and businesses, including clothing boutiques and a wellness center with a rotating schedule of yoga and massage practitioners, have short-term leases. One container is devoted to conference space and can be rented hourly to entrepreneurs for meetings.

"If any businesses outgrow their space, I'll consider that a win," Cuevas says. "It means they can attribute some of their success to what we've built at the Iron District."

## Iron District: A menu of options

**3andMe Boutique:** Fashion-forward women's clothing

**Avobite:** An avocado restaurant with both carnivore and vegan-friendly dishes

**B-Rad's:** Comfort food from around the globe such as loco moco, a Puerto Rican pork chop

**Boheme:** Artisan crafts and hand-cut soaps

**Kind Food:** Vegan food with earth-friendly practices

**Morning Day Café:** Breakfasts and pastries

**Plantain District:** Cuevas' Cuban-inspired food

**Safe Bakes:** Cookies and pastries baked with those who have allergies in mind

**Snow Buh by Ice Cream BAE:** Unusual flavor options

**Tiki Huna:** Classic tiki cocktails, original drinks and local beer and wine

**Urban Café:** Everything from a quinoa burger to a lobster grilled cheese sandwich

**Wasteland Society:** Edgy T-shirts



Customers enjoy their first bites at Iron District, a shipping container food and retail concept that opened in October in North Kansas City, MO.

# The couple that rules together, stays together

Law graduates navigate work and love — at home, at work and on television

BY KELSEY HAYNES

If you ask Dana and Keith Cutler whether they thought, in their wildest dreams, they'd ever have their own television show, they'd tell you "heck no!" In fact, Dana Tippin Cutler (J.D. '89) says when she first got the call from a production company several years ago looking for a husband-and-wife team to preside over a new courtroom TV show, she hung up.

"I thought it was a joke. I have a friend who likes to jerk my chain and I thought he was pranking me," Dana says. She didn't buy it until the production company called back and confirmed they were not, in fact, pranking her.

Dana was sure her husband, Keith Cutler (J.D. '89), wouldn't go for it, but to her surprise, he agreed to learn more. Two years later they're the hosts of the Emmy-nominated daytime TV show *Couples Court* with the Cutlers, the first time a married couple has ever presided over a TV courtroom.

## FINDING THE BALANCE IN LAW AND LOVE

*Couples Court* with the Cutlers specializes in, you guessed it, couples — helping them find resolutions and move forward. The Cutlers travel back and forth to Atlanta, where the show is filmed, several times a year to shoot new episodes. This allows them to keep up with a demanding TV schedule while still managing the family law practice they manage with Dana's father and another associate.

On the show, the Cutlers are given a little more leeway than regular courtrooms allow; they're able to laugh and keep up their natural banter, show expression when they hear wild stories and provide real advice to the couples standing before them.

On the show, they draw from their experiences practicing law, but also from practicing marriage.

"As lawyers, you learn a lot with different experiences, and the trial work we do in our regular jobs has trained us to think on our feet. We were building up for the show and didn't even know," Keith explains. He adds that after 37 years of being together — or as Dana puts it, joined at the hip — "we know a little something about relationships."

The Cutlers met in the 1980s while getting their undergraduate degrees in Atlanta — Dana attended Spelman College and Keith attended Morehouse College. They have enjoyed joking and pestering each other ever since.

Despite living and working together every day, the Cutlers say they don't think that's too much time together. They truly enjoy each other's company.

"We're like the columns of a church. They're working together but not on top of each other," Dana says. "We have different hobbies and interests at home, and when we're in the office we're working on different things as well."

Dana works primarily as an education attorney, representing charter schools, while Keith works as a civil defense trial attorney.

## KEEPING A COMMUNITY FOCUS

The Cutlers don't think of themselves as celebrities, but their unique job does require them to occasionally play the autograph-and-selfie game at the movies or the grocery store. Most times, the Cutlers say, people are just surprised to discover that two of their favorite TV stars live in Kansas City. The show currently airs in more than 100 U.S. television markets, and episodes are also available on YouTube.

Kansas City is important to the Cutlers, though, not just because they live and practice law here, but because they care about the community and being civically engaged.

"At UMKC, they stressed being a good lawyer for the community," Keith says. "One of the best things about UMKC is their emphasis on the practical side of law, which contributes to the learning experience that a lot of students don't get until after law school."

As you can imagine, the Cutlers are big supporters of the UMKC School of Law. Both have been honored with the school's Alumni Achievement Award — Keith in 2008 and Dana in 2018 — and Keith is an adjunct professor. It's important to them to help young lawyers achieve the same level of success they have, wherever that may be.

"I didn't appreciate how accessible and relatable the faculty were at UMKC until I realized that law school wasn't like that for everybody," Dana says. "It's the same thing we enjoy about the judges we work with in Kansas City."

Their advice for future attorneys? A law degree is one of the most versatile degrees you can have. Even if you don't want to go to court, which is one small part of the job, there are plenty of other things you can do.

A TV show, perhaps?

PHOTOS: (Top) Keith and Dana on their wedding day, June 10, 1989, at the Second Baptist Church in Kansas City, MO. (Center) The couple in Atlanta on their first date. (Bottom) Keith and Dana on the set of their TV show, *Couples Court* with the Cutlers.



# A tale of two talents



Artwork from Grant Snider's (D.D.S. '11) upcoming children's book, *What Color is Night*, which debuted on November 5. These illustrations are a more whimsical, childlike version of the comic strips Snider is best known for.

**TRUE BLUE** GRANT SNIDER (D.D.S. '11)  
School of Dentistry

## Dentistry graduate discovers his gift for smiles — from the artist's chair to the orthodontist's office

BY BRYCE PUNTENNEY



When most people are just waking up for work, Grant Snider (D.D.S. '11) is sitting down at his drawing table to make himself laugh with one of his signature comic strips. The rest of his work day is spent straightening smiles at his orthodontics practice in Wichita, Kansas.

About 10 years ago, just as Snider was accepted to the UMKC School of Dentistry, he also embarked on another career, illustrating comics. His multi-panel comics have appeared in the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Best American Comics 2013* and UMKC's very own student newspaper, *University News*. A collection of his comics, *The Shape of Ideas*, published in 2017, was translated to French.

Every morning at 5:30 or 6 a.m., Snider works on one of his comics for either his blog or social media.

"I always knew I was into science and math," Snider says, "but I also knew I had a creative side that I wanted to nurture as well."

### FROM DENTAL SCHOOL DOODLES TO BIG-TIME ARTIST

When Snider was first searching for a creative outlet, he considered watercolor painting or another form of traditional art. Eventually, though, he realized that what he most enjoyed was reading comic strips like Calvin and Hobbes and *The Far Side*.

The real revelation happened when he came across *New Yorker* cartoons, with their simplicity of design and quirky observations of life. Initially he was turned off by them because they were such a departure from the newspaper comics he had grown up with. But as he spent more time with them, it suddenly clicked — this was what he wanted to do creatively.

Snider started to use cartooning as a way to relax after dental school classes. He began carrying a sketchbook everywhere he went, doodling anything that inspired him. Over a week or two, those small doodles would become a finished comic, delivering smiles to his close friends and family.

Fast forward several years and his charming, minimalist cartoons are being featured in the publication he once admired, the *New Yorker*, making people smile around the world.

As Snider puts it, he started drawing before he knew what he was doing, and soon, it was too late to stop — not that he'd want to.

### A NEW SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

When he and his wife had their first child in 2012, Snider, like many first-time parents, thought "Hey, I should write a children's book." The process, though, proved more arduous than he

initially anticipated. With a number of ideas going nowhere, he was beginning to doubt the plan.

Then he found out he was chosen for an artistic residency in the Catskill Mountains of New York. He thought this would be the perfect opportunity to work on his children's book idea. So in April 2018, Snider spent a week in a cabin with three feet of snow on the ground, a trip he calls "the most creatively frustrated period of my life."

Two weeks later, he got an email from a book editor. She had seen a particular cartoon on his blog and wanted to use it as the starting point for a children's goodnight book. Snider thought the idea was brilliant and, admittedly, was mad he hadn't thought of it first.

He spent a frantic weekend getting a rough draft back to the editor and, within a week or two, the book was picked up by a publisher.

"After all the frustration of two years, plus being snowed in for a week in the mountains working on an idea that wasn't going anywhere, an email arrives and two days later I'm on the way to getting published," Snider says.

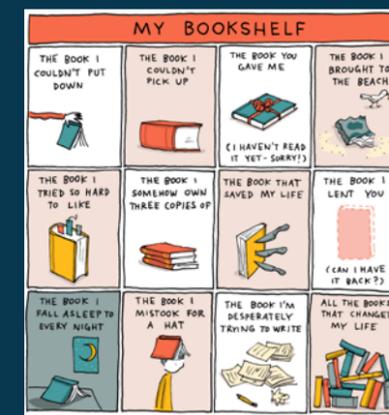
That book, *What Color is Night*, hit shelves on November 5.

### DOUBLE THE DOODLING POWER

According to Snider, navigating the worlds of science and creativity is freeing for him. He views his orthodontic work as a break from any writer's block he may be experiencing. At his dental chair, he can focus solely on the patient in front of him and not worry whether a comic he's working on is funny or not.

The cartooning bug runs deep in Snider's DNA, as his twin brother, Gavin, is also an illustrator. Gavin, like Grant, also pursues dual careers, as an architect and an illustrator. They talk constantly about their work. Snider says critiques are easier to take coming from his brother than, say, from a book editor.

Over the next year, two more of Snider's children's books will be released, as well as another collection of his comics. As for what's next, Snider says he plans to divide his time between straightening teeth and making himself laugh creating his own illustrations.



## Doodling and dentistry

Snider's comic strips have been featured in publications like the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*. He first started doodling as a way to relax while studying dentistry at UMKC. Now he draws nearly every day, often getting up before the sun to get in a few illustrations before starting work at his orthodontistry practice in Wichita, Kansas.

# More than a music class

One man's determination to bring music to Kansas City's youth

BY LINDSEY MAYFIELD



At 10 years old, Darryl Chamberlain (B.A. '15, '16) walked to school composing music in his head. Not the jazz or blues music he was used to hearing, but orchestral music. Despite having no formal training and no instruments in his home, the music still came to him at an early age.

Now, more than 40 years later, Chamberlain is actually composing some of those melodies for the Kansas City children in his A-Flat Youth Orchestra. Since its creation, Chamberlain has helped more than 200 students learn to play instruments, many of whom wouldn't have had access to music lessons otherwise.

Chamberlain's journey from 10-year-old sidewalk composer to volunteer orchestra director is an unlikely one, made possible through remarkable hard work and tenacity.

## TWO FIRST LOVES: MUSIC AND READING

One of Chamberlain's defining life moments came when he was just a kindergartener. A teacher brought an opera record to class. Six-year-old Chamberlain was moved in a way he had never experienced. And though he doesn't remember the exact composition, he remembers vividly how it made him feel.

"That music touched my soul to my core. It changed me," he says. "I wish that teacher was still alive so I could tell her how much it meant to me."

Chamberlain may not have had access to lessons or even an instrument, but he did have one important advantage: a mother who loved music and encouraged him to love it too.

He grew up listening to records with his mom — mostly country and western, he says, since that's what they enjoyed watching on TV at the time, but also jazz, gospel and instrumental. Standout favorites included Vince Guaraldi's "Cast Your Fate to the Wind," Sam Cooke's "Everybody Loves to Cha Cha Cha" and anything by Mahalia Jackson.

Chamberlain's mother had always wanted to play an instrument and at one point enrolled in a mail-order piano course. But without a piano in the house, she didn't get very far. Her investment didn't go to waste, however. Chamberlain read the course cover-to-cover, gaining a basic understanding of music theory.

It would be another decade before he picked up his first instrument, but Chamberlain says it didn't matter. His mother may not have been able to give him music lessons, but she gave him something much more valuable — a gift that would last a lifetime and change him into the man he is today.

"The thing my mother gave me that was most important was a love of reading. In our house there was everything you could ever want to read," he says. "In eighth grade, I used to skip lunch and go to the library and read. I bet that librarian wonders where that strange kid ended up."

“ We don't think of music as being mathematical, but it is. Everything should line up correctly as you work through the score, and many of the instruments have to play in different keys to sound good together, otherwise you've got chaos. ”

Darryl Chamberlain (B.A. '15, '16) conducts the A-Flat Youth Orchestra at one of their Saturday rehearsals at the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center in Kansas City, MO.

## A WINDING ROAD TO MUSIC (AND BACK)

At 17, Chamberlain began attending a church full of energetic young people like himself. The church had a youth choir Chamberlain longed to join, but he didn't know how to sing or play an instrument.

Instead, he hung around the choir practices and one day noticed a guitar leaning in a corner. With a few minutes' instruction from the bass guitarist and the devoted study of a Mel Bay guitar book, Chamberlain taught himself how to play.

Then, another stroke of luck: The church needed a place to store their piano after a storm, and Chamberlain's house was nearby. A few months later, and Chamberlain had taught himself piano, too.

Over the next few decades, Chamberlain continued to learn and teach music while he, as he puts it, "created a life." He got married, worked as an auto mechanic, earned an associate's degree from the Electronics Institute and got a job at Texas Instruments.

The degree in electronics is a special point of pride for Chamberlain, who for years lagged far behind grade-level in math. Because he was such a gifted reader, his issues with math weren't always noticed in school. By eighth grade, Chamberlain says, "I was sure I was stupid," and he barely graduated from high school.

So when he started his degree in electronics, he had to start with beginner's algebra, earning no credit, then work his way up to college-level algebra. How did he manage it? The same way he learned the guitar — asking someone to help him. At the time, he was working in food service for St. Luke's Hospital and recruited someone in the financial department to help him understand the mathematical equations.

Today, he understands the strong correlation between math and music.

"We don't think of music as being mathematical, but it is," Chamberlain says. "Everything should line up correctly as you work through the score, and many of the instruments have to play in different keys to sound good together, otherwise you've got chaos."

## COMMUNITY NEED BECOMES PERSONAL MISSION

In 2004, Chamberlain moved back to Kansas City from Texas and found himself at the American Royal Parade. When he had left Kansas City back in the 1980s, the parade had been full of Kansas City high school bands. By the early 2000s, he was concerned to see none performing. He started talking to educators in the area and discovered the need for music education was great, but funding wasn't always available.

In 2005, Chamberlain decided to create a youth orchestra for kids who might not have access to music otherwise. He began buying instruments for his project, which has now become the A-Flat Youth Orchestra.

Chamberlain purchased most of the instruments out of his own pocket, starting with just the money he earned playing piano at a local church. He was a familiar face at local pawn shops and spent hours searching listings on eBay and newspaper classifieds, looking for any instrument that looked playable (or at least fixable).

Today, the orchestra owns enough instruments to outfit two-and-a-half concert bands. Bassoons, violins, cellos, guitars, flutes, drums and more, are all owned by A-Flat Music Studio, Inc. and loaned or rented to students who want to play music. Recently, a woman saw a *Kansas City Star* story about the orchestra and donated a harp.

On Saturdays, the instruments show up in places like the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center, in the hands of dozens of young people, many of whom wouldn't have had access to an instrument elsewhere. More than 30 students play in the orchestra, ranging

in age from seven to 19. Chamberlain has recruited five other teachers to help instruct various sections.

Chamberlain's motto? "There will not be a child in this city who wants to study music but can't because money is an issue."

Chamberlain's love for teaching is apparent. It's part of what led him to UMKC in 2009, eventually earning two bachelor's degrees: one in secondary education—social sciences and another in history. His studies at UMKC were a natural fit, he says, giving him access to formal education in the areas of art, history and teaching that he's informally enjoyed his entire life.

## THE POWER OF GIVING KIDS A CHANCE

When asked about the particularly memorable moments from his 14 years directing the orchestra, a few come to mind, Chamberlain says: The day a student who had been struggling blurted out, "I'm doing it! I'm actually reading!" Receiving an invitation to a graduation party for one of his students who had earned her M.D. Seeing the students play at the Kauffman Center in bow ties.

Once, a young man asked him why he "dresses up" for rehearsal. Chamberlain explained to him, "I dress up for you, because it's the kind of respect I want to extend to you. I want you to know you're worth it." The next week, that same student came to class in slacks and shiny dress shoes, looking, as Chamberlain put it, "like a million bucks."

It's all part of his teaching method, exposing students to sights and sounds they might not experience anywhere else.

"I might be in the middle of class and decide to sing a line from Ave Maria or recite a poem," he says. "I think it's important for kids to see a black man recite a poem, because I hope they see some of themselves in me."

He recalls another time when a student who, after learning to play the timpani, told her grandmother, "I think I finally found something I can be good at." Chamberlain was moved.

"The 'finally' part was what caught my attention," he says. "'Finally' means you've been looking for something, and that's what I was in eighth grade — looking for something to be good at."

Now, that girl is the orchestra's chief timpanist and, as Chamberlain puts it, "a totally different person." Just like the young boy composing music on his way to school back in the 1960s, she's found a home in music that, with any luck, will last her a lifetime.

The important thing, Chamberlain says, is giving kids a chance. Because if we can teach music, we can also teach discipline, character, tenacity, all those little things that make a person — and a community — great. In the process, you might help a child discover a part of themselves they didn't know existed.

"There are among us Beethovens and Bachs and Mozarts and Schuberts and Schumanns and so many more," Chamberlain says. "They are among us, and sometimes they get a chance to surface, because they came from a community that supported music and allowed them to grow."



“There are among us Beethovens and Bachs and Mozarts and Schuberts and Schumanns and so many more. Sometimes they get a chance to surface, because they came from a community that supported music and allowed them to grow.”



Chamberlain with members of the A-Flat Youth Orchestra at a performance at the Kauffman Center for Performing Arts.

[Top] Chamberlain conducts an ensemble from the orchestra at the Kauffman Center for Performing Arts. [Center] One of Chamberlain's assistant instructors plays alongside the students in the A-Flat Youth Orchestra. [Bottom] One of the orchestra's members plays a drumset during one of their weekly Saturday rehearsals.

# Destined to fly

Alumna takes her math skills to the skies as a competitive hot air balloonist

BY HALLIE SPENCER



Some families go camping, some go fishing. Kim Magee's (B.S. '13) family went flying.

Magee's parents were both commercial balloon pilots, and she took the first of many family hot air balloon rides

at age 7. When she left her hometown of St. Louis for UMKC, she realized how much she missed ballooning and decided to get her own license. Today, she's a competitive hot air balloonist, holding multiple national and world records.

Magee finished her degree in mathematics and statistics at UMKC before going to the University of Iowa to earn her master's degree in biostatistics, eventually taking a position as a biostatistician at the university. Around the same time, through connections from her dad's balloon repair shop, she met her husband, Adam. Now they support each other as they compete at the highest levels of ballooning and train the next generation of pilots at their business, The Balloon Training Academy. The program, based in Iowa, offers online, self-paced education, as well as in-person training via a network of volunteer instructors.

## HOW MANY BALLOONING RECORDS DO YOU HAVE?

I currently have six world records and nine national records in distance and duration, with some single flights breaking multiple records.

## HOW DO YOU TRAIN FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT? DID YOUR MATH DEGREES COME INTO PLAY?

There was a lot of prep work: getting equipment ready, calculating lift, fuel capacity, etc. My first attempt to break a record was unsuccessful, but I learned a lot from the experience. For my second attempt, I adjusted the size of my balloon and found multiple ways — like finding lighter clothing and gear and going on a strict diet — to reduce the overall weight so I could conserve fuel and stay in flight longer.

There was also a lot of prep work around weather and flight planning. I endlessly pored over spreadsheets of lift calculations, factoring in the weights, fuel, forecasted temperature and altitude. There is a lot of math involved in ascents, descents, angles, etc. to maneuver the sky. I even had a dedicated meteorologist with whom I would talk about location shifts, wind speeds, temperature, winds aloft, clouds, dew points — you name it, we were looking at it.



## IS THERE A REASON YOU ATTEMPT THESE FLIGHTS IN WINTER?

The colder it is, the less fuel you burn. So my first record-breaking flight was on a crisp North Dakota January morning with a 2-degree high. We guessed the temperature was somewhere between 40 and 50 below zero at the altitude I was cruising. I was at 10,000+ feet for two hours with my experimental balloon and a propane tank strapped to my back. It's a fine balance between how warm you want to be versus how much fuel you want to use.

## NOW THAT YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND HAVE OPENED THE BALLOON TRAINING ACADEMY, WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH THROUGH IT?

Like all of aviation, the sport of ballooning has struggled to attract new, young pilots. With The Balloon Training Academy, we hope to make hot air balloon education and training accessible and economical. So far it's been successful — we've helped train approximately 40% of all new hot air balloon pilots. We want to see the number of balloon pilots increase for many years to come.

# Health, in 240 characters or less

Using social media to bring health care to a wider audience

BY BRIDGET KOAN

Amy Patel (M.D. '11) is a rising star among breast radiology professionals, both for her work in health care and her use of social media to connect with colleagues, students and patients.

As medical director of the Women's Imaging Center at Liberty Hospital and assistant professor of Radiology at the UMKC School of Medicine, Patel has learned how important social media can be in making connections with patients, mentoring young professionals and engaging in meaningful discussion.

In October, Patel participated in a number of social media efforts as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. UMKC also took part in the conversation by holding a #UMKCChat with Patel via Twitter.



**UMKC @UMKC**  
Can you tell us why social media is a good communications tool for you and other health-care professionals? #UMKCChat



**Amy Patel, MD @AmyKPatel**  
Social media is an incredible tool to connect with #medical colleagues locally, nationally and globally! That networking can lead to many collaborations, including manuscripts, #mentorship, sponsorships... the list goes on! #UMKCChat



**UMKC @UMKC**  
Why is social media an effective platform to interact with patients? #UMKCChat



**Amy Patel, MD @AmyKPatel**  
We have incredible potential to reach #patients, particularly in #rural areas, to educate and advocate. This can assist in bridging the gap to #healthcare disparities. #UMKCChat



**Amy Patel, MD @AmyKPatel**  
For me and where I practice in the #KansasCity area, it's important to reach #women, especially in the age ranges of 30, 40-80+. @Facebook is a way in which @HospitalLiberty Women's Imaging shares content with ALL women, but particularly attempting to reach #rural women #UMKCChat

# A new way to wellness

Alumna uses diverse background to help people heal from the inside out

BY PATRICIA O'DELL

Earning degrees in dance, psychology, and counseling and guidance with a minor in gender and women's studies may sound like a meandering path to a career, but alumna Lauren Thompson (B.F.A. '09, B.A. '09, M.A.'12) knew she could make all of her interests come together.

And today, with experience ranging from large-scale art installations to federal inmate counseling, she has clearly succeeded.

Thompson's unique brand of wellness comes together at her Pilates studio, Thrive Pilates, in Kansas City's Westside. But her work goes far beyond what happens in that cozy space. The connections she makes with her clients are aimed at benefitting the whole person — not just their body composition.

## SO MANY INTERESTS, SO LITTLE TIME

Thompson will be the first to tell you: It wasn't exactly a straight path to her current line of work.

"In high school I really wanted to end up on Broadway," Thompson says with a laugh. "But when I was accepted to the Conservatory, my parents made a deal with me. They would pay for college if I got another degree. I'd gotten interested in psychology in high school, and even though I didn't know what I could do with that it, I chose dance and psychology."

Thompson says people were often skeptical when they learned she was pursuing such different courses of study. She got the same question many college students get when selecting a major (or two) without a crystal-clear job description: "What are you going to do with that?"

Anyone asking that question hadn't realized the connection between mind and body, she says, "but I was living it. It was so clear to me how those degrees worked together. Eventually, everyone else caught up."

As an undergraduate at UMKC, Thompson would dance for six hours a day, then go to her psychology classes. Along the way, she also decided to get a minor in gender and women's studies. And she didn't stop with her undergraduate degrees. A year after graduation, she was back at UMKC, pursuing her master's in counseling and guidance, with a focus on mental health.

Around this time, Thompson started teaching Pilates and yoga classes, a way to combine her backgrounds in dance and psychology that would turn out to be a crucial thread through her many work experiences.

Over the next several years, she finished her master's degree and completed an internship working with people with eating disorders. She thought she might enjoy a career in women's health. Then, the recession hit.

When she was offered a job working with sex offenders in maximum security at Lansing Correctional Facility in Leavenworth County, Kansas, she took it. Though that job offered many challenges, Thompson calls it a "blessing" — just another step on the path to where she is today.

## MAKING HER OWN WAY IN THE WELLNESS WORLD

During this time, Thompson was teaching and exercising less, usually taking only one yoga class a week. She was frustrated that she wasn't moving her body more, so she put formal

counseling aside and went back to teaching yoga and Pilates full-time. But even the studios where she taught brought some frustration. "I couldn't really teach the way I wanted to teach," she says. "And I couldn't control the messaging, which I am hypersensitive about because of my knowledge of mental health."

She realized it was time to open her own studio, incorporating her wide range of training and experiences. She wanted to meet the multifaceted needs of women from both physical and mental health perspectives, and her diverse background gave her the skills she needed to do it.

"One of the things that we address is that a lot of exercise and training is developed for the male body. That can be a problem for a number of reasons," she says. "It's not as if women can't do these things, but there are times when many exercises are not appropriate."

Thompson notes that the constant physical fluctuations of women's bodies — menstruation, pregnancy and menopause — deserve acknowledgement in the wellness world.

"Men's health is relatively linear. They don't experience the same kind of cycles that women do," Thompson says. "We know that girls playing soccer experience significantly more ACL tears correlating with menstruation. It's similar to the hormones from pregnancy that cause joints to be less stable."

In addition to being in tune with individual physical needs, Thompson pays close attention to her language.

"The idea of 'skinny equals healthy' is false, and that mentality is mostly what we hear from the fitness industry," she says. "I think it's shame-based, and shame-based motivation never works. Intensity is not going to treat you well."

Thompson practices the balance that she preaches. While work is important to her, she is active in the Kansas City arts and dance communities, using her Conservatory training to choreograph and participate in collaborative art projects. She also works on zoning and development issues in her Westside neighborhood, which has become popular with developers.

While managing her work in wellness, art and community development, Thompson works hard to stay healthy and grounded.

"I think the important thing is to not compare yourself to other people. There's so much wasted energy for women on comparing. I feel lucky that I had the training early to help me block that."



Lauren Thompson (B.F.A. '09, B.A. '09, M.A.'12) works with one of her students at Thrive Pilates Studio in the Westside neighborhood of Kansas City, Missouri.

TRUE  
BLUE

LAUREN THOMPSON  
(B.F.A. '09, B.A. '09, M.A.'12)  
Conservatory, School of Education,  
College of Arts and Sciences

# Undercover rock star

Lifelong musician finds a new mission helping amputees

BY JULIE WHITSITT

Jim Suptic (B.S. '15) shown in one of the more colorful areas of the Steps of Faith office: a mural left over from one of their annual Thundergong concerts.

Jim Suptic's colorful career has taken him from European tours to northern Missouri riversides and, now, to the nonprofit sector. Through it all, his love of music has been a defining feature, and also what makes his life a little different than the average nonprofit worker's.

Suptic (B.S. '15) spent several months of this year on a world tour with his rock band, The Get Up Kids. He has played guitar with the band for the better part of 25 years, recording six albums and playing more than 70 tours in the U.S. and abroad.

The band's indie, punk-influenced sound has earned them fans not just across the country, but around the world. Their 2019 tour included shows in Australia, Japan, Malaysia and Hawaii, as well as across the continental U.S.

When he's not on stage, Suptic is working at Steps of Faith Foundation in Kansas City, an organization that helps uninsured or underinsured amputees get prosthetics. Even that experience, though, came to him through music.

## FOLLOWING THE MUSIC

In the late 1990s, Suptic was a student at the Kansas City Art Institute. He had planned on getting his art degree, but when The Get Up Kids got the chance to go on a European tour, he decided to put college on hold and focus on music.

"In hindsight, we weren't making that much money, but when you're 19 and your rent is paid on time every month, you're feeling pretty good about yourself," Suptic recalls.

In 2004, while The Get Up Kids were on hiatus, Suptic launched a new band called Blackpool Lights with Brian Everard and Billy Brimblecom. While making their first record in 2005, Brimblecom was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma in his leg, which had to be amputated.

The type of prosthesis that could support Brimblecom's active lifestyle turned out to be astronomically expensive, so Suptic helped coordinate a benefit, raising \$30,000 to help his friend cover the costs.

The experience was just the first taste of nonprofit work to which Suptic would eventually return.

## BACK TO KANSAS CITY (AND COLLEGE)

By 2010, Suptic and his wife had two young daughters, and he decided to return to college. He earned his associate's degree from Johnson County Community College, then turned to UMKC to pursue a degree in geology. He was drawn to the major because of his interest in the environment, but also because of his fond memories collecting rocks as a kid.

(Top) Suptic (far left) with his bandmates from The Get Up Kids. (Bottom) Suptic's friend and coworker Billy Brimblecom works with one of the amputees that has received help through the Steps of Faith Foundation.

While at UMKC, Suptic had an internship with the U.S. Geological Survey in Lee's Summit, Missouri, collecting and testing samples from Missouri rivers. In 2015, he graduated cum laude, something he's not convinced he would have been able to do when he was young and lacked focus and determination.

Through his studies, he honed his skills in resource management, problem-solving and public health solutions that would serve him in a unique and unexpected way later in life.

"You learn a lot more than just getting a degree," he says. "It's all about time management and self-motivation. If you don't help yourself, you're going to fail miserably."

## WHERE MUSIC MEETS MEANING

Around the time he graduated from UMKC and The Get Up Kids were winding down their 20th anniversary tour, Brimblecom moved to Kansas City from Nashville. He brought with him his foundation, Steps of Faith, created to help other amputees facing barriers getting the equipment they needed.

Suptic asked him to lunch and offered to help the cause. Today, he serves as the foundation's operations coordinator, using his learned skillset to work with prosthetists nationwide who donate their time and prosthetic companies who give the organization wholesale rates.

Since its creation, Steps of Faith Foundation has grown significantly — from helping 20 amputees receive prosthetics in its first year to serving more than 100 in 2019.

"Our goal is to get people the prosthetic they need to get back to work. Then they'll have insurance and a way to support their families, and they don't need us anymore," Suptic says.

Steps of Faith's annual fundraiser, a benefit concert called Thundergong, includes celebrity guests like Jason Sudeikis, Fred Armisen and Wynonna Judd, whose husband, Cactus, is an amputee and on the Steps of Faith Board of Directors. The event allows Suptic to blend two of his passions — music and philanthropy — for a cause close to his heart.

As for his dual careers of rock band guitarist and nonprofit coordinator, Suptic says they're not so different at all. His advice is to pursue your passions — all of them.

"It's good to have a job where you're doing something positive," he says. "The music makes people happy, and it feels good to be making a difference in people's lives through Steps of Faith."





**2019 UMKC ALUMNI AWARDS**

Each year, the UMKC Alumni Association celebrates the outstanding achievements of UMKC graduates at the Alumni Awards gala. The most recent Alumni Awards celebration took place on March 15, 2019 and honored the distinguished alumni you see here, while also raising scholarship funds for the next generation of Roos.

The 2020 recipients will be inducted on April 24, 2020. Learn more about them at [umkcalumni.com/2020AlumniAwardees](http://umkcalumni.com/2020AlumniAwardees).

## UNIVERSITY-WIDE AWARDS



**DWIGHT SCOTT**  
(B.L.A. '94)  
*Alumnus of the Year*



**STEVEN ST. JOHN**  
(B.A. '96)  
*Spotlight Award*



**DICK GIBSON**  
(B.M.E. '67, EMBA '02)  
*The Bill French Alumni Service Award*



**JOSÉ FAUS**  
(B.A. '87)  
*Defying the Odds Award*



Kathryn Ann (Strickland) Hembree



Kathryn Hembree Night



Mary Pat (Strickland) Lange

**THE STRICKLAND-HEMBREE FAMILY**  
*Legacy Award*

## ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



**JEANNE DREWES**  
(B.A. '76)  
*College of Arts and Sciences*



**PATRICK M. ROSE**  
(B.S. '73, M.S. '75)  
*School of Biological and Chemical Sciences*



**GEORGE M. GUASTELLO II**  
(B.B.A. '82, MBA '84)  
*Henry W. Bloch School of Management*



**PHILIP STRAUB**  
(B.S.E.E. '92)  
*School of Computing and Engineering*



**STANISLAV IOUDENITCH**  
(Performance Certificate '03)  
*Conservatory*



**TERRY G. O'TOOLE**  
(D.D.S. '81)  
*School of Dentistry*



**REBECCA L. STOLBERG**  
(M.S. '96)  
*School of Dentistry – Dental Hygiene*



**DEBORAH SIEBERN-DENNIS**  
(B.A. '05)  
*School of Education*



**PAUL F. KAVANAUGH**  
(J.D. '84)  
*School of Law*



**WILLIAM ARTHUR COOPER**  
(M.D. '92)  
*School of Medicine*



**JOHN STEVENS**  
(D.N.P. '12)  
*School of Nursing and Health Studies*



**ALAN W. CARTER**  
(B.S.P. '79, Pharm.D. '02)  
*School of Pharmacy*

To learn more about the awardees and watch videos about their achievements, visit [umkcalumni.com/2019AlumniAwardees](http://umkcalumni.com/2019AlumniAwardees).

# CLASS NOTES

## 1970s

Former Kansas City, Missouri Mayor **Kay Barnes** (M.A. '71, M.P.A. '78) was named senior director for university engagement at Park University in Parkville, Missouri. Barnes will represent the University as an ambassador in its government relations and business development initiatives.



**Judy Jacobs** (MBA '77, Ph.D. '86) was featured in "Lest We Forget," a Holocaust memorial exhibit at the World War I Museum and Memorial. The exhibit, created by German-Italian photographer and filmmaker Luigi Toscano, features 70 portraits of Holocaust survivors.

## 1980s

**Ann Frigon** (L.L.M. '83) joined Farm Bureau Financial Services as a wealth management advisor. Frigon brings more than \$100 million in assets under management to the business. Previously, she served as a wealth advisor at Carson Wealth Management in central Kansas.

**Peter Stobie** (B.B.A. '88, MBA '90) was named chief financial officer and vice president for business and finance at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta. Previously, he served as director of strategic initiatives at the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences.



**Siabhan May-Washington** (B.A. '88, M.A. '91) was named president of St. Teresa's Academy in Kansas City, Missouri. Previously, she served as assistant principal of faculty development at Pembroke Hill Upper School in Kansas City, Missouri.

*"Working in education is important to me because lives are transformed for the better when people are educated. It's such a joy to work in education and see the growth that can happen for students when they learn."*



**Mark McHenry** (M.P.A. '89) was appointed to the four-member Missouri Conservation Commission by Gov. Mike Parson. Previously, he spent 15 years at the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department. He is also a business

consultant for Ochsner Hare & Hare, the Olsson Studio, a landscape architecture firm.

*"As a kid growing up in Iowa I spent all my time outdoors. I learned to appreciate what Nature and the outdoors had to offer and knew I always wanted it to be a big part of my life."*

**Mike Perry** (B.B.A. '89) was named president and CEO at Hallmark, becoming only the second person outside the Hall family to hold the top job.

## 1990s



A new animated children's special from **Rajiv Chilakalapudi** (M.S. '97) premiered on Netflix in October 2019. "Mighty Little Bheem: Diwali" is a spinoff of the series of the same name and follows young Bheem as he travels through his hometown in India, bringing mischief and adventure.

**Karen Garber-Miller** (Ph.D. '95) was named dean of Park University's College of Education and Health Professions in Parkville, Missouri. Previously, she served as dean of the School of Education at Avila University.

**Aimee Gromowsky** (J.D. '99) was appointed to the Kansas City Election Board by Gov. Mike Parson. Gromowsky is a criminal defense attorney at The Gromowsky Law Firm in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Monica Jeffries Hazangeles** (M.M. '91) was named president and CEO of Strathmore, Maryland's preeminent performing arts center, becoming only the second person to lead the institution in its history.

**Tammy Queen** (MBA '94) was named director of finance for the City of Kansas City, Missouri. Queen has worked for the city for 24 years, serving as city treasurer before becoming deputy director of finance.

**Lisa G. Walker** (M.A. '95, E.D.S.P. '00) was named executive director of federal programs with Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Previously, she served as assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction and an elementary school principal for the Grandview C-4 (Missouri) School District.

## 2000s



**Charlie Corcoran** (M.F.A. '01) was named a 2019 Henry Hewes Design Award honoree for his scene design in The O'Casey Trilogy at the Irish Repertory Theatre in New York.



**Tiffany Hamilton** (B.L.A. '03, M.A. '09) was named the first-ever chief diversity officer at Pace University in New York City. Prior to joining the team at Pace, she served in various enrollment, multicultural affairs and student success roles at UMKC.

*"As a first generation college student, in addition to supportive faculty there were several offices that supported my academic success and, moreover, my personal and cultural growth. Once the investment was made in me, I knew I wanted to impart the same experiences for others."*



**Patrick Du Laney** (M.F.A. '09) joined the cast of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child on Broadway. In addition to his acting

roles, Du Laney has taught several theatre and dance classes at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa.

**Dennis Ehrich Jr.** (EMBA '03) was named chief technology officer at GlynnDevins in Kansas City, Missouri. Previously, he served as CTO and chief product officer at Service Management Group.

## 2010s

**Daniel Beeman** (B.A. '14) is playing the role of Cornelius Hackl in the first national tour of Broadway's Hello Dolly! Beeman's former stage credits include the national tour of Something Rotten! and many performances at the Kansas City Rep and Starlight Theatre.

**Katie Bruns** (B.A. '12, M.A. '16) was named Kansas City Charter School Teacher of the Year by the Missouri Charter Public School Association. Bruns currently teaches at Brookside Charter School in Kansas City, Missouri, as a second and third grade instructional coach.



New research by **Ally Kateusz** (Ph.D. '17) suggests women had a greater role in the early Catholic Church than previously thought. Kateusz, a research associate at the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, presented her findings to the International Society of Biblical Literature at a conference in Rome.

**Christina Butera** (D.M.A. '18) composed the music used as a soundtrack for the sculpture park at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The music, "Suite for the Passersby," was included in a smart-phone app to be used while guests browsed the exhibit.

**Gavin Brivik** (B.M. '16) won Most Original Composition by a Young International Composer at the World Soundtrack Awards.



Former UMKC distance runner **Quinlan Moll** (B.B.A. '17) qualified for the Olympic Marathon Trials. Moll finished the qualifying race in 2 hours, 18 minutes and 50 seconds. The qualifying mark for the Trials was 2 hours and 19 minutes. He will now compete in February 2020 for one of three men's spots on the U.S. team for the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. He also attends the UMKC School of Law and works full-time at a Kansas City law firm.

*"Crossing the finish line was a pretty amazing feeling, I was tired from the race but also pumped up from adrenaline and excitement. It was a special moment, so I tried to just soak it in."*

**Ubadah Sabbagh** (B.S. '15), a graduate student at Virginia Tech studying translational biology, medicine and health, earned a \$390,000 National Institutes of Health award to map unexplored regions of the brain.

**Jared Stricklin** (M.S. '14) was recognized among the 2019 Forbes Best-In-State Next-Gen Wealth Advisors. Stricklin is the senior vice president-wealth management at Mistler Dunn Stricklin Wealth Management in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Mimi Vo** (M.D. '03) was named one of the Most Influential Business Women of 2019 by the St. Louis Business Journal. Vo is an internist and CEO of the Vo Medical Clinic in St. Louis.

Whatever you've been up to, we want to hear about it.

Visit [umkcalumni.com](http://umkcalumni.com) or email us at [perspectives@umkc.edu](mailto:perspectives@umkc.edu) to submit your class note. You may also submit class notes by mail to:

Perspectives  
UMKC  
300B Administrative Center  
5115 Oak St.  
Kansas City, MO 64112

Please include your daytime phone number, home address, email address, degree and graduation year.

We reserve the right to edit submitted text as space allows.



## SEE THE WORLD WITH US

UMKC alumni and friends receive exclusive discounts on trips through Go Next, a national leader in alumni association and group travel.

### Tropical Retreats

Caribbean and Mexico  
February 11-18, 2020

### Legends to Lagoons

French Polynesia  
March 5-15, 2020

### Celtic Charms

London, Scotland and Ireland  
July 2-13, 2020

### Summer Vistas of Alaska

Vancouver and Alaska  
July 23-30, 2020

### Adriatic Awakening

Mediterranean: Athens to Venice  
October 15-25, 2020

Find details for these trips and keep an eye out for 2021 trips at [umkcalumni.com/travel](http://umkcalumni.com/travel)



*“My wife and I are very frugal. We started to save money early and invest in stocks. For us, nothing is better than donating to the UMKC Foundation in support of our students. It’s a win-win situation.”*

—WAI-YIM CHING, PH.D., Curators’ Distinguished Professor of Physics

## STRENGTHEN UMKC WITH A GIFT OF STOCK

Gifts of appreciated securities or mutual funds to the UMKC Foundation can provide significant support. Consider transferring your securities today!



For more information, visit our website at: [GO.UMKC.EDU/STOCKGIFT](http://GO.UMKC.EDU/STOCKGIFT)

## MAKING A GIFT TO UMKC IS EASY!

- Contact your financial advisor.**  
Get direction on which securities to use and when to make your gift.
- Transfer the stock gift to:**  
National Financial Services LLC  
DTC #0226  
For Credit to Account #026-661554  
Account Name: UMKC Foundation
- Notify the UMKC Foundation.**  
Once you transfer the stock, please contact UMKC Foundation at (816) 235-2754 to ensure your gift is properly acknowledged.

# UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI KANSAS CITY ATHLETICS

FOR TICKETS:  
[KCROOS.COM](http://KCROOS.COM)



[KCROosAthletics](https://www.facebook.com/KCROosAthletics)

# KANSAS CITY'S COLLEGE TEAM



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY  
5000 Holmes St.  
Kansas City, MO 64110-2499

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Kansas City, MO  
Permit #6113

REPRESENT KANSAS CITY'S  
UNIVERSITY. GET YOUR ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION T-SHIRT TODAY!

AVAILABLE IN STORE OR ONLINE  
AT [UMKCBOOKSTORE.COM](http://UMKCBOOKSTORE.COM)

