

Best of Mizzou Students

As each new semester starts, campus teems with life. Sidewalks, classrooms, dorms and quads fill up with the people who make Mizzou necessary: students. Their faces and purposes are varied. They're academic achievers who stand out among their peers. They're leaders who take an active role in their worlds. They're researchers who get their first taste of life in the lab. And they're artists who learn to make the music, paint the pictures and write the words that move us. Most of all, they're people discovering their capabilities. With 26,805 students to choose from, picking the best seems near impossible. Here is but a sample, a handful of the eager minds at Mizzou.

Making Changes to

In playwriting, rewrites are a given. Ideas change as characters develop. Written words evolve as they become spoken dialogue. Eventually, a play becomes something close to what you had in mind when you started, or it might become something different but equally effective.

It's not that different from life, really. Take playwright **Kate Berneking Kogut**, BA '88, MA '02, of Columbia for example. A 48-year-old doctoral student whose work has been featured at the Mizzou on Broadway program in New York for the past two years, Kogut has rewritten her life's script several times.

With much career and life experience behind her, she decided in her 30s to pursue a bachelor's degree in theater at MU. All she had ever wanted to do was act, but she had never really done it. After graduating in 1988, she found her first paying role — acting out assorted ailments as a pretend patient for medical students.

Kogut's studies led her to an even bigger rewrite, though, as she discovered her penchant for playwriting. She could see the thrill in being the string-puller, developing characters and placing them in situations of her imagining.

Sometimes, Kogut controls those characters, but often they seem to have minds of their own. Such was the case in *Survival Dance*, a play about domestic violence that she wrote as a master's student. With little overt violence but plenty of tension and psychological abuse, *Survival Dance* deals with a woman's walking-on-eggshells relationship with her husband. The "dance" is the central metaphor in a play full of them. "The dance is asking, 'How do I move to make sure I can make it to the next moment?'" Kogut says.

An MU cast and crew produced the play locally. Then it was chosen for the American College Theater Festival and featured at September 2003's Mizzou on Broadway, a New York showcase for student work. Of all the performances, though, opening night in Columbia stands out to Kogut. It was a benefit for The Shelter, a center for abused women. The center's staff and residents attended that performance, and some paid her the biggest compliment possible.

"They said it really captured the essence of that type of relationship," she says. People ask if that accuracy comes from personal experience, but she is content to leave them in the dark. "We draw from all areas of life," she says, "including our own experiences, but we're not limited to writing about our own lives. An enormous amount of research went into *Survival Dance*. And I like to think it paid off."

Kogut's work doesn't always focus on the darker side of

STORIES BY
CHRIS BLOSE



the Script



PHOTO BY JIM O'NE

Kate Berneking Kogut, whose work was featured at the Mizzou on Broadway showcase in 2002 and 2003, discovered playwriting while studying acting. "I'm starting to figure out what I want to be when I grow up," says the 48-year-old.

relationships. She also wrote *Show Me Romance: A Guide to Romantic Adventures in Missouri* (Pebble Publishing, 2002). The book offers romantic alternatives to get people beyond the typical "roses and candlelight dinner."

Whether Kogut's own future will bring rewrites or not, writing will be a part of it. "It's something I'll never give up," she says. "It's just something I have to do."

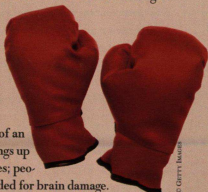
The Fighter's Mind-set

When **Vinay Rawlani** was about 10 years old, he became fascinated with boxing. He watched fighters train and took mental notes on their movement. He wasn't a natural athlete, but when he finally stepped into the ring, he fought like he'd been doing it for years.

A senior biochemistry major from Columbia, Rawlani takes the same approach to his undergraduate studies as he prepares for medical school. "You go to school for four years without actually practicing medicine," he says, "but you build up such a knowledge base that when you run into problems, you go back to what you know. That's the way boxing is."

His fighter's mind-set works in and out of the ring. A researcher and hospital volunteer, he became the youngest amateur to win a national pro-am boxing title in 2000. He won another in 2002.

Rawlani, the first American-born member of an Indian family, rarely brings up boxing in academic circles; people might think he's headed for brain damage. On the contrary, he says: "Having training outside of academia is the best thing you can do. It teaches you to set goals, and it teaches you to keep your mind straight."



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The Value of Being There

The start of college brings the mixture of excitement and anxiety that comes with new experiences, everything from meeting a new roommate to attending that first class. Fortunately, students can turn to their community advisers (previously called resident assistants), student workers who live in dorms, for support if the anxiety overwhelms the excitement.

That's what **Jessica Jutte**, a junior physical therapy major from Dallas, did when she was a freshman. Now, as a community adviser in Jones Hall, she completes the cycle by simply being there for a whole new crop of women. Along with another adviser, she works with 80 students in the Greek Leadership community.

Jutte — also active in Campus Crusade for Christ and the Delta Delta Delta sorority and an athletic trainer for MU football — knows that the job comes with pressure and some potentially tough situations. The trade-off is that she gets to relive the excitement and newness of the college experience by working with those going through it.



Feeding the Frenzy

Aside from pop stars, few 20-year-olds know what it's like to be in the midst of a media frenzy, a seething mass of photographers snapping photos and reporters scrambling for the oh-so-important sound bite. But **Kimberly Adams** knows.

As a Fox News Channel intern in New York for summer 2003, the junior journalism and political science major from St. Louis got to play her part in the media melee. She spent days in stakeouts outside a federal courthouse, where she waited for a maligned Martha Stewart to emerge. She helped cover the Jayson Blair scandal at *The New York Times*. Her biggest moment came with one of the top stories of the year: the blackout. When New York City went dark, along with other parts of the eastern United States and Canada, Adams stepped up from the role of intern and produced live shots and audio for the national news network.

Of course, Adams' ability to perform under pressure should come as no surprise. In June 2003, she earned a Top Ten Scholarship from the Scripps Howard Foundation, an award that included a \$10,000 scholarship and designation as one of the 10 best journalism students in the country. She understandably slipped out of her usual professionalism for a moment when she found out about the award.

"I'm in the New York bureau of the Fox News Channel with all these correspondents and producers," Adams says, "and all the sudden they hear this squealing coming from the corner. They looked at each other like, 'What's wrong with the new intern?'"

Adams consistently makes the dean's list and is also a McNair Scholar. She didn't pursue journalism at MU to pile up awards, though. Really, she just loves to tell stories. That's where the journalism education, everything from writing to visual production, comes into play. The political science major represents the extra work needed to tell those stories properly, especially given her goal of becoming a foreign correspondent.

Now that Adams has had a taste of just how exciting journalism can be, she knows she's chosen the right path. One day, we might all turn on our TVs to find an image of her reporting the news from far, far away. She'll live the fab life on the road in pursuit of the story.

"I know I'll just be sleeping one night," she says, "and I'll get a phone call saying, 'Kimberly, you feel like traveling?' I'll say 'Sure,' pick up my already packed bag, and then I'm out the door."



PHOTO BY RICHARD E. LEVINE

As a Fox News Channel intern, Kimberly Adams, holding microphone, learned just how much patience journalism requires. While covering The New York Times scandal, she waited one day from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. outside the newspaper's building for the higher-ups to emerge. They never did.



PHOTO BY BOB HILL

Between his accounting studies and his athletic aspirations, swimmer Matt North barely has time to breathe.

The Mind Races

About an hour before each race, MU swimmer **Matt North** visualizes the competition to come. He swims the whole race in his head, from the moment his feet leave the starting block to the finishing stroke. In his mind, he feels better than he's ever felt in the water; he doesn't even get tired.

That vision became a reality at the 2003 U.S. Summer National Championships, where North's performance in the 200-meter breast stroke qualified him for next summer's Olympic trials. He also barely missed the cut for the 100-meter breast stroke, but he'll get a chance to try for that at a later meet.

For now, North, a junior accounting major from St. Charles, Ill., must stay focused on academics and the MU team's season. Fortunately, if he's learned anything from balancing four hours of practice a day with his studies, it's self-discipline.

Changing the Faces in Class

Electrical engineering major **Evelyn Thames** seems to have adjusted just fine in a male-dominated field. She says her peers treat her like one of the guys.

But Thames, a senior from St. Louis, knows not everyone adjusts so easily. It can be intimidating for a minority or woman in a class full of mostly white, mostly male faces. That's why she has taken an active role in engineering diversity for her field.

Despite taking a grueling 18 credit hours each semester, Thames has found time to serve as vice president of the National Society of Black Engineers and join numerous organizations, including the Society of Women Engineers and Access in Engineering, which recruits minorities to the College of Engineering and supports current students.

Thames plans to go into project engineering, which she practiced during an internship with the Dial Corporation. Her goals regarding diversity will continue after school; she hopes to give back to the college by establishing a minority scholarship program.

City Counsel

Mention the phrases "land use" and "planning and zoning" and a lot of people's eyes will glaze over. Not **Shomari Benton's**, though. His eyes will widen at the prospect of talking about two of his favorite topics.

Benton, BA '02, a second-year law student and former MU track star from Kansas City, Mo., wants to plot the future of the places we live. By going into environmental law, he will work with planners and landowners to decide on the best ways for cities to grow. "I've just always had this fascination with cities," he says, "It's amazing how they run, and how you can make or break a city through planning."

Benton, recipient of the Lloyd Gaines Scholarship, may have an ulterior motive in his chosen career. After he cuts his teeth as an environmental lawyer, he wants to take the next logical step for someone with his interests by pursuing local politics. So if you see him on the campaign trail years from now, you'll know he's ready to go from planning cities to running them.

The New Organization Man



PHOTO BY STEVE MORSE

Silas Allard once presented testimony on the death penalty before the Missouri Senate Judiciary Subcommittee.

People from older generations often accuse the young of being apathetic. They obviously haven't met **Silas Allard**.

Allard, a senior religious studies major from Neosho, Mo., spends much of his time working on various causes, including Amnesty International and Students for a Free Tibet. When he's not participating, he's creating; he founded a religious studies club and the Mizzou Activism Network, a fledgling group he hopes will coordinate communi-

cation in the activist community.

Of course, Allard, winner of the respected Hesburgh award for leadership and academics his sophomore year, doesn't do these things to prove older generations wrong. He's involved because he knows young people can offer new ideas on old issues.

"There's always a need for innovation in the activist community," Allard says, "including new ways of engaging the public and the policy-makers." Part of that innovation comes from a positive focus. "It's not just a negative 'don't do this' side, but there's also a 'we have solutions' side to it as well."

Medical Motivation



PHOTO BY STEVE MORAN
Brandon Tilghman has worked on anesthesiology and radiopharmaceuticals.

On a scholars' trip to South Africa, senior chemistry major, undergraduate researcher and future medical student **Brandon Tilghman** learned about the staggering HIV/AIDS rate in the country. Sobered and saddened, he walked around the city of Durban and wondered which of its inhabitants were infected.

Tilghman, from St. Peters, Mo., already had experience with the disease. A relative died from it, and he dealt with it two years in a row with the Alternative Spring Break program. He played with HIV-positive children, and he comforted AIDS patients as they drew their last breaths. He noticed how many of the faces he saw were black.

African Americans, like Africans, show high rates of the disease. "It really makes me want to be a doctor even more," says Tilghman, who earned a McNair Scholarship and several others. "I feel like I'm already a leader, but I know I can also serve African Americans by being an example of how to live right and be safe."

To be a well-rounded example, Brandon also studies Spanish and sings gospel music, a passion he gets from his mother. When he and fellow singers hit a pitch-perfect harmony, his spirit lifts, and he briefly escapes the hard realities of his chosen career.

The Guiding Principle

At least once a week, **Natalie Abert** becomes both a Mizzou cheerleader and historian. She doesn't do it by waving pompoms or donning a tweed jacket; she does it by guiding groups of wide-eyed potential Tigers and their parents around campus.

Abert, a senior English and Spanish major from Alton, Ill., has worked as a Tour Team member since she was a freshman. Walking backwards with a tour group in tow, she points out Jesse Hall, the Columns and other landmarks and tells their history. She adds her own touch with quirky tidbits: the agriculture building's second function as a fallout shelter, the old Brewer Fieldhouse's floor that could be removed for rodeos, and the like.

If Abert, president of the Delta Gamma sorority, displays extra enthusiasm, it's partly because of her own tour experience: "I'd wanted to lead tours ever since my own campus tour, because that made the biggest difference in my decision to come here."



PHOTO BY STEVE MORAN
Tour guide Natalie Abert tries to infect prospective students with her own enthusiasm for MU.

A Critical Career

In an emergency room, dull moments don't last very long. They're usually trumped by life-or-death situations, tense procedures, and patients in pain and need. That's just the kind of atmosphere in which senior nursing student **Chris Farnan** wants to work.

"I want an intense, adrenaline-filled, never-bored kind of job," Farnan says. "I want to be able to think on my feet and use everything I've learned." As a student and as a nursing aide in the cardiac intensive care unit, Farnan has gotten his first glimpse of that frenetic environment. But it isn't just the excitement that attracts the former Mizzou cheerleader from Barnard, Mo., to the field; it's also the close, daily interaction with patients that only nurses experience.

"You're there giving care to people," he says. "You're getting to know them and watching them get better. It's very gratifying."

The Student Soldier

On a Missouri August morning, as the 70th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment prepared to depart for Colorado then Cuba, **Spc. Katherine Collins** was a mixed bundle of excitement and heartbreak, all wrapped in a National Guard uniform.

She lost her composure as her husband, Craig, held her for what would be the last time in a long while; she dreaded leaving him and her two stepchildren. She also regretted postponing her studies as an English major working toward a teaching certificate in the College of Education. But the prospect of adventure on a year of active duty lessened the pain, and she knew when she signed up that this day could come at any time.

Collins, whose husband is also in the Guard and whose brother serves in Iraq, has seen active duty in Bosnia, Panama, Pearl Harbor and at the 2002 Winter Olympics. As a part of the Joint Task Force at Guantánamo Bay, where she comes into contact with detainees regularly, she writes for the command newspaper and acts as liaison for visiting media.

After a year, Collins will return to life as a student, wife and mother. For now, she's proud to take part in world-changing occurrences. "The day terrorists flew into the twin towers and the Pentagon, killing thousands, I simply watched the event on TV as I prepared to head off to class at Mizzou," she says. "I felt so detached from the reality of it all. Now the truth of terrorism's existence hits me in the face daily."



PHOTO BY SGT. JOLENE STAKER
One of Spc. Katherine Collins' duties in Cuba is interviewing soldiers for news releases that run in their hometown newspapers.



Undeniable Animal Attraction

Sathya Chinnadurai's house is a small zoo. The featured attractions are two cats, two rats, a corn snake and a three-legged dog. It's a fitting environment for someone who wants to spend his life working with animals.

Chinnadurai, from Chesterfield, Mo., once thought of becoming a doctor, but he was always fascinated with wildlife. He decided to combine those interests by pursuing a doctorate in veterinary medicine and a master's degree in wildlife sciences from the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

In summer 2003, that combination led him to South Africa, where he studied how stressful situations affect animals in the wild. For example, he looked at how management and predator introduction affected their stress levels. As a research assignment abroad, that experience fit perfectly with what he wants to do in his career. "My ideal situation would be a job that lets me have a home base at a university or a zoo in the states," he says, "but travel and work with wildlife in other countries."

Back in the United States, he also has worked on domestic animals in a small-animals clinic, an equine center and the College of Veterinary Medicine's intensive care unit. Chinnadurai's dedication has earned him numerous awards, including the Brown Fellowship that funded his South Africa trip, multiple scholarships from the college and the Cecil Elder Award for veterinary pathology.

He's gotten more from his studies than just awards, though. Some creatures in his personal zoo came from the veterinary school. He adopted the two rats, Paulie and Silvio, from a program that trains students in the proper handling of lab animals. The dog, Brodie, was an emergency room case, and one of the cats, Floyd, came from the school as well.

Despite Chinnadurai's many animals, he's most interested in cats. He jokes that if he had lived a past life, he must have been a cat. "But I don't have flashbacks about chasing mice or anything like that," he says. His love of small cats translates to a love of big cats as well, especially given the similar mannerisms they share. Since moving to Columbia, he has been involved with Mizzou Tigers for Tigers, an MU group that raises money for tiger conservation.

"So many people own little plush tigers and tiger junk and have tiger stickers on their cars," Chinnadurai says, "but nobody associates that with the real animals." So when he says he's a tiger lover, it doesn't simply mean that he's a rabid MU sports fan. 🐾

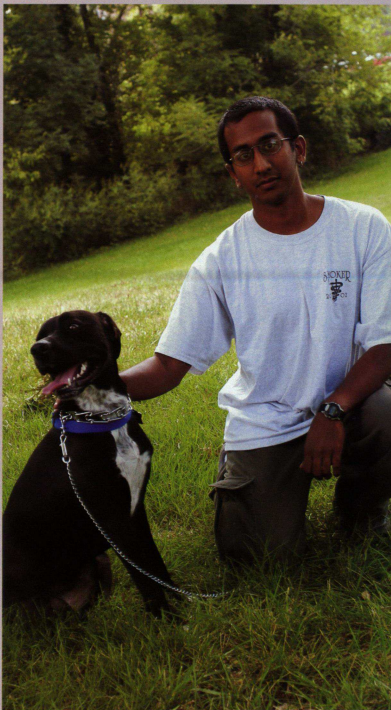


Photo by Steve Mason

Sathya Chinnadurai — shown with the three-legged dog Brodie, one of the many animals in his zoo-like home — serves as president of the student chapter of the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians.