



# More Scholars for Scholarships

If you're a National Merit finalist, one of Missouri's top-notch high school seniors, chances are you won't end up on the University of Missouri's Columbia campus. If you're one of the thousands of above-average students who did attend Old Mizzou and who now are prosperous alumni, you may find that hard to believe. But here are the facts:

Each year Missouri high schools graduate some 50,000 young men and women.

Approximately 300 of them are designated National Merit Scholarship finalists through competitive examinations.

But there are only 19 National Merit Scholars on the Columbia campus, a few from out of state. And that's from a four-year potential of some 1200 National Merit Scholarship finalists in Missouri alone. A few of these young men

and women are at Columbia, of course, attending Missouri on their own or with other financial aid, but most of them are somewhere else.

Now, not all of Missouri's academically superior high school graduates are National Merit finalists. The state produces hundreds of outstanding students, many who attend the University through the Curator scholarship program. But it also is true that a National Merit finalist is a top-rated college prospect, and most of them are ending up on other campuses, largely out of state.

Disturbing, isn't it?

That's why the Alumni Association, the Development Fund, a faculty committee, student body president Dave Thomas, and Chancellor John Schwada have given impetus to a program to do something about the situation.

The nationwide Merit Program is administered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, an independent, non-profit organization devoted entirely to scholarship activities. Last February more than 17,500 high schools administered the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test. Fifteen thousand students were named semifinalists, 304 from Missouri, a figure based on a percentage of the total number of high school seniors in the state. Semi-finalists become finalists by being endorsed by their schools, by taking the Scholastic Aptitude test to substantiate their National Merit test scores, and submitting biographical material. Virtually all semi-finalists become finalists.

The National Merit Corporation chooses 1000 finalists for a \$1000 one-time National Merit scholarship, and the others become eligible for sponsored Merit Scholarships. Sponsoring groups include corporations, colleges and universities, foundations, associations, and individuals. Last year there were 2000 sponsored scholarships. The 19 Merit scholars on the Columbia campus are sponsored by companies. There is one permanent National Merit scholarship in agriculture, the Homer Young Scholarship, financed by Farmland Industries. Heretofore, the University has not sponsored National Merit scholarships. Although National Merit scholars are not chosen on the basis of need, the amount of the stipend, varying from \$100 to \$1500 per year, is based on the family's financial picture.

Obviously, one problem at Missouri has been money. There were no University funds available for National Merit Scholars. But there also is a problem of recruitment, getting the finalists to choose the University of Missouri-Columbia as their first choice.

In the spring of 1968, only 30 of Missouri's 300 finalists named the Columbia campus as their first college choice. Of this spring's finalists, 50 indicated their top preference as the University's Columbia campus. (Only eight seniors from outside the state indicated this campus).

To make the Columbia campus more attractive to students of National Merit quality, the faculty plans to design a special curriculum for them, eliminating some present requirements and adding special projects and courses. In addition they will be actively recruited by letter and personal visits with deans and other faculty members and administrators.

The Alumni Association also will be called upon to help. In each of the 14 Missouri Alumni Association districts, National Merit finalists will be invited to special dinners, where the advantages of the University can be explained. The Alumni Association also will sponsor a campus visit for the finalists.

However, there probably is no better recruiting device than having scholarship money available. This year all the 50 Missouri finalists are being offered scholarships, averaging about \$400 each. Six of the 50 are national winners; money for the other 44 will come from the existing Farmland Industry scholarship, from alumni contributions to the nonrestricted portion of the Development Fund, and from a special fund-raising effort in St. Louis conducted by Darryl Francis, a member of the Alumni Association's Board of Directors.

The Development Fund will attempt to sustain the program through contributions of alumni as individuals and in special campaigns in St. Louis, Kansas City, and selected out-of-state metropolitan areas.

Upgrading faculty, programs, and facilities all are necessary in making this a truly distinguished University. Also important is making additional attempts to attract superior students. □