

# Opening Up the Future

With state funding stagnant, Mizzou and other universities nationwide have become more resourceful as they seek to grow and improve. Building a substantial endowment is key, and on that score, the university has arrived at a watershed moment. Check out the range of endowments below, which help students and faculty make the most of their time at Mizzou. **STORY BY ERIC FERGUSON**

**D**ecember 13, 2017, was an historic morning, as Chancellor Alexander Cartwright stood before an audience of Mizzou alumni, faculty, staff and students in the rotunda of Jesse Hall. The gathering celebrated an achievement nearly 130 years in the making: The University of Missouri's endowment had crossed the \$1 billion mark, becoming one of only 37 public universities nationwide to do so.

The Columns were still attached to Academic Hall when in 1888 the "Father of the University" gave \$6,000 to establish Mizzou's oldest endowment, the eponymous James S. Rollins Scholarship Fund. Now worth nearly \$250,000, the Rollins endowment continues providing financial aid to Mizzou students, with no end in sight.

More than dollars and cents, Mizzou's endowment is an emblem of the gratitude and generosity that alumni and friends hold for MU. It's a sign of their belief in the university's future. After announcing the record-breaking total, Cartwright yielded the floor to Mark Wilkins, BA '90, managing director of the Wilkins Group at UBS in St. Louis and a cabinet member for the Mizzou: Our Time to Lead Campaign. "Human beings helping other human beings be the absolute best they can be, to live up to their potential," Wilkins said with a catch in his throat. "There's not enough of that in this world. But we can all do our little bit. And all of the little bits people have done for the university have added up to a billion dollars."

# It's About People

**F**or Wilkins, a letter from former MU Director of Admissions Georgeanne Porter opened a window onto the world. Porter's note informed him that he had been accepted to study at the University of Missouri, where his interactions with faculty and his experiences in Army ROTC launched his journey from rural Missouri to the ends of the earth.

"I love this university," Wilkins says. "But what I really love are the people here — the students, my fellow alumni, the faculty and the staff." Wilkins has strengthened each of these groups through three endowments he has created at MU.



**Georgeanne Porter Endowed Scholarship:**

Provides annual scholarships to MU students

Wilkins arrived at MU as a "scared kid who did not have a lot of experience outside of Waynesville, Missouri." Today, he is managing director of the Wilkins Group, a private wealth advisory team. He served four

years in the United States Army and travels the world regularly. Wilkins credits much of his development to his time at Mizzou and his relationship with Porter, who with him and others launched the Mizzou Outreach Student Recruitment Team. Students on the team serve as ambassadors for the university at admissions events and college fairs. Porter and her husband, Gil, hosted cookouts for the outreach students at their home. "I vividly remember sitting in the Porters' house and having meals with them," Wilkins says. When Porter died in August 2017, Wilkins reflected on her role in his life and resolved to establish the scholarship endowment in her honor. "For me and lots of people, she cared deeply when she didn't need to," Wilkins says. "It was her job to be the director of Admissions, but she became a mentor and someone who really cared about our well-being as individuals."



Through Wilkins' Army ROTC scholarship, he joined the Tiger Battalion, which challenged him outside the classroom. "Army ROTC was probably the foundational thing that I did as a student at Mizzou," Wilkins says. "I learned so many things that I still use today in the business world around discipline, leadership and stick-to-itiveness."



**Mark and Patrick Wilkins Opportunity for Excellence Endowment in the Department of Military Science and Leadership:**

Supports the Army ROTC Tiger Battalion

Wilkins' brother, Patrick, also went through Army ROTC and spent 20 years as an Army officer, retiring as an Army Ranger colonel with 11 combat tours.



The heart of Mizzou is its faculty, Wilkins says. His endowment helps Mizzou attract and

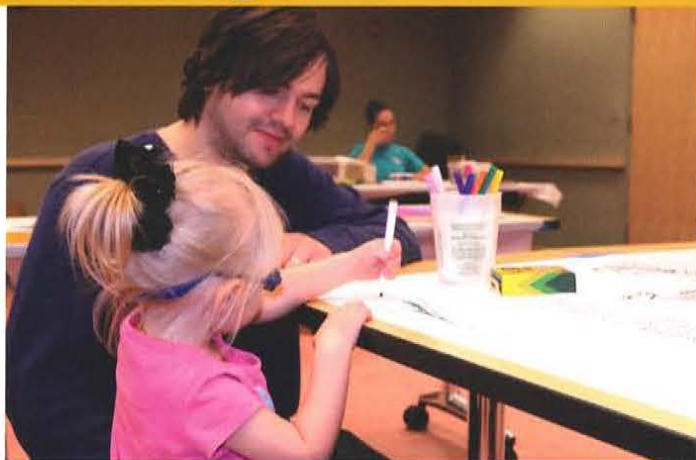


**Mark A. Wilkins Fund for Excellence in the College of Arts and Science:** Provides faculty members funding for teaching materials, research and travel expenses related to their scholarship

retain stellar faculty members through support that aids their research, enriches student learning and raises the university's standing in the Association of American Universities. "If you think about young, up-and-coming faculty members, a \$3,000 grant to attend a conference can be critically important in their careers," Wilkins says. "I wanted to do something where the dean would have money to fund whatever it is they need. Faculty bring the Mizzou experience alive for students."

+ Michael Todd, a junior majoring in secondary education, performs a fireman carry on Michal Gwinn, a sophomore majoring in English, during ROTC physical training exercises on Stankowski Field.

# Making a Difference in Autism



**A**licia Curran remembers how she felt — uncertain, afraid, helpless — when her 4-year-old son was diagnosed with autism in 2004. “There are so many questions and so much ambiguity in raising a kid with autism,” Curran says. “I didn’t know anything about autism when Sam got his diagnosis. Here I am, his mom, who’s supposed to fix things, and I couldn’t do that. Those unknowns can be really painful.”

Curran wasn’t the only one learning about autism and how it affects families in 2004. “My daughter was working as a behavioral therapist with children with autism,” says now-retired Pimco CEO Bill Thompson, BS CiE ’68. “Then a number of employees at my company were telling me that their children had been diagnosed with autism. I was learning a lot about autism, which was not very well understood back then.”

**Thompson Family Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Endowment:**

Bolsters the center’s research and programming, including salaries, research, travel and equipment

Thompson discovered that Mizzou had leading autism practitioners and researchers. He and his wife, Nancy, HES ’67, decided to create a center at Mizzou that would deliver clinical care, research, training and support for families. “As a parent, when I heard the Thompson Center was going to open, it was just a feeling of hope,” Curran says. “There was going to be somebody who would understand my kid.”

The center opened in 2005, and eight years later Curran joined its staff as a project coordinator, where she provides a parent’s perspective on the center’s services. “Parents have the one expertise that is missing on a health care team, and that’s lived experience,” she says. “We’ve tapped into every service offered at the Thompson Center, and my experiences through that are exactly why I wanted to come here and be a team member. The magic happens here.”

For the Thompsons, that magic is the reward. “I have seen the impact that the center has made on the kids and the families we have met,” Thompson says. “That to me is the return on our investment.”

+ Scenes of treatment from the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, which opened in 2005 with an endowment from Bill and Nancy Thompson.



# Stop the Stereotypes



← When Emma Worgul had to choose between attending Washington University, Kansas State and Mizzou, the Brazeal Honors College Endowed Diversity Scholarship was the deciding factor.

**A**lthough Jim and Cathy Brazeal endowed their diversity scholarship in 2004, its inspiration dates back to the United States Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v Board of Education* ruling 50 years earlier. The decision rendered "separate but equal" public schools for black and white students unconstitutional. It also marked an inflection point in the life of Jim Brazeal, BA '67, MBA '69.

Before 1955, the year Springfield, Missouri, public schools were integrated, Brazeal's interactions with African Americans had been limited to sporting events at the Springfield Boys Club. "When I entered junior high school that year, integration was only one of many changes," Brazeal says. "As I worked side-by-side with African American classmates and teammates, I got to know them as friends. After that, I never again thought in terms of stereotypes."

Brazeal credits his undergraduate and graduate education at the University of Missouri for his success at Ford Motor Company and later as owner of Kansas City Power Products. As he and his wife, Cathy, began giving back to the university, increasing campus diversity became a primary goal. "When I was a student, I was immersed in my studies and was just not aware of the history of the university," Brazeal says. "As I learned more about it, I became convinced that our gifts could best be used



## **Brazeal Honors College Endowed Diversity Scholarship Fund:**

Provides four-year awards to incoming Honors College students from under-represented groups and covers costs for study abroad and the Discovery Fellowship Program

to promote diversity and inclusion at the university."

The Brazeals established their scholarship to help the Honors College attract star students who might not have attended Mizzou otherwise. Emma Worgul, a senior accounting major from Kansas City, says the scholarship has been the highlight of her time at Mizzou. "I was looking at K-State and Washington University, but the Brazeal scholarship put me over the top in choosing Mizzou," Worgul says.

"I studied management and marketing in Italy two summers ago. Half of our class was Mizzou students, and half of our class was European students. We got weekends off for short trips, like going to Prague."

The program has provided similar transformative experiences for 11 students to date, with more coming to campus every year. The Brazeals build relationships with the students by dining with them at least once a semester. "Whenever I have news to share, I call my parents, then I call my friends, and then I call the Brazeals," Worgul says. "I just have to tell them."

# Counting Cookies



† Cat Whitmer, a junior majoring in elementary education, uses story problem cards with fourth-grader Antasia Black at Beulah Ralph Elementary school in Columbia.

**C**ookies make everything more interesting — even math.

“A lot of people think that learning math is about memorizing number facts and then applying those facts to solve story problems,” says Susan Empson, the Richard G. Miller Endowed Chair in Mathematics Education and a Professor of Learning, Teaching and Curriculum in the College of Education. “That’s not the way it works with kids. They can easily picture things and make sense of story situations. Let’s say I’ve got seven cookies, and I eat three.

**Richard G. Miller Chair in Mathematics Education:** Augments the chair-holder’s work, including research support and equipment, professional development, teaching materials, travel, staff support, and salary stipend

How many do I have left? Kids understand a story situation like this one before they learn the fact ‘7 minus 3’ by recall.”

Empson’s research focuses on how elementary school teachers can align their instruction with how children think about numbers, particularly fractions. She taught high school mathematics in New York City and as a Peace

Corps volunteer in Morocco before becoming an accomplished and sought-after academic. Empson had been on the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin for 20 years when Kathryn Chval, dean of the College of Education, offered her the Miller Chair. “I wasn’t looking for a job,” Empson says. But the benefits that come with the position changed her mind. “The chair provides funding that allows me to do things like pilot research before I end up writing a full-scale proposal for a grant, for example. It allows me to collaborate with people at a distance if I want to do that.”


Empson and University of North Carolina at Greensboro professor Vicki Jacobs are working with more than 100 grade-school teachers to introduce frameworks for how kids think about fractions. “After working with small groups of teachers in a few schools, we thought, ‘Let’s work with a large group of teachers from several school districts and study how to support their learning on this larger scale.’ So there has been a steady progression of questions,” Empson says. “Then one research project leads to the next set of questions.”

# MU Through and Through

**F**anny Hickman was a student at MU in 1891, one year before Academic Hall burned to the ground. Five generations later, whenever they visit campus, Hickman's descendants in the Grace family make it a point to photograph the Columns, which still stand 126 years after the fire.

The late John Grace, BS '58, MS '63, Hickman's grandson, was "MU through and through," says his wife, Karen. Her status as a confirmed Kansas Jayhawk presented only minimal issues during their 52 years of marriage. "John was such a gentle, kind person," Karen says. "He'd say, 'I'll always support KU ... unless they're playing MU.'"

Grace presided over the Mizzou Alumni Association's Buchanan County Chapter from 1998 to 2000 and served in national roles as well. His affinity for the University of Missouri led him to explore creating a scholarship program that would help students from Buchanan County get a scholarship to MU. After

 **John O. Grace Memorial Buchanan County Alumni Chapter Endowed**

**Scholarship:** Provides scholarships to students from Buchanan County, Missouri

Grace passed away in 2014, his family started the John O. Grace Memorial Buchanan County Alumni Chapter Endowed Scholarship to honor his memory.

The scholarship has allowed Madeleine Brownfield, a biochemistry major from St. Joseph, Missouri, the flexibility to pursue extracurricular activities in addition to her coursework. She played flute in the University Philharmonic Symphony and joined the Mizzou Outreach Student Recruitment Team, which answers questions from prospective students and their parents. She also has a flourishing videography business. "I started doing videos on a marine biology trip in high school," Brownfield says. "Then a friend asked me to film his wedding proposal. Now, I have a couple weddings booked, and my sorority [Kappa Alpha Theta] asked me to join their social media team."

Brownfield plans to attend medical school to pursue her interests in neurology or anesthesiology.

"It's always so exciting to follow these young people after they get the scholarship," Karen Grace says. "I've lived in Buchanan County all my life, so I know many of the families." **M**

+ Madeleine Brownfield majors in biochemistry, and an endowed scholarship allows her to pursue extracurricular activities.

