



# A Strong Constitution

Kinder Institute scholars aim to keep democracy safe for the world.

Story by Josh Murray

Photo courtesy Samantha Franks

Originally, Samantha Franks' concentration area within her political science major was conflict, but she made the switch to constitutional studies. "I'm probably more interested in conflict," says Franks, a senior from Nixa, Missouri. "It's just that the constitutional studies stuff here is so good."

The program is strong thanks in large part to the University of Missouri's Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy, an interdisciplinary program that began in 2014. Made possible through a

grant from the Kinder Foundation, a family philanthropic foundation established by Rich, BA '66, JD '68, and Nancy Kinder, the institute promotes scholarship and teaching on the American constitutional and democratic traditions.

## Education in the Nation's Capital

Among the opportunities the Kinder Institute offers undergraduates is the Kinder Scholars Program in Washington, D.C. Franks was one of 21 MU students who spent 10 weeks of their summer in 2015 in the nation's capital as part of the pro-

+ Students visit Annapolis, Maryland, during the Kinder Scholars summer program in 2015. Internship work was supplemented with field trips throughout the scholars' stay in Washington, D.C.

gram, which combines coursework on the foundations of American constitutional democracy with a related internship.

Students worked at internships Monday through Thursday before attending a Thursday night class with topics ranging from voting rights to Reconstruction to national security.

"It's not a breadth you get to see a lot in other classes," Franks says. "We had really intense, in-depth discussions."

"The classes were more like a discussion with a small lecture component," says Kinder Scholar Anurag Chandran. "Every professor brought something new. It didn't get stagnant; every week was exciting."

Each Friday the Scholars took a field trip to a location related to Thursday night's class discussion. Those trips include visits to Harper's Ferry, Colonial Williamsburg and Monticello. A trip to the Smithsonian included meeting with the museum curators to discuss a new exhibit on the intersection between American History and Religion.

"That was an incredible opportunity for those of us who are particularly history minded," Franks says.

### Capitol Hill Internships

The program is taught by Mizzou faculty members and is designed to connect scholarship on constitutional democracy with the "real world" of American politics.

Student internships included jobs on Capitol Hill, in the Executive Branch, at lobbying firms and with not-for-profit groups. Franks interned for the American Federation of Teachers. There, she conducted opposition research.

"I worked in the health care department most of the summer," Franks says. "If a local nurses union was looking for a raise, I would find a political means for them to pursue that. It was a lot of analyzing hospital data and looking at the health care bill to see where it fell on the line of legality and then figuring out why the nurses deserved a raise."

Chandran interned with American Enterprise Institute, which is dedicated to research and education regarding issues related to government, politics, economics and social welfare. He was a research analyst with the responsibility of monitoring Al Qaeda activity in the Indian subcontinent, mainly Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

"I was looking at primary sources, such as

Twitter accounts, affiliated with the militants and mapping out what their leadership looked like," Chandran says. "I would also write about the attacks they claimed as well as the attacks they didn't claim."

Chandran's research was published on the American Enterprise Institute website.

Prior to his summer experience, Chandran spent the spring semester interning in the Washington, D.C., office of Missouri's senior U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill, BA '76, JD '77, an opportunity he gained through the Civic Leaders Internship Program.

"Just being there and seeing things progress and seeing how things work — it was an eye-opening experience," Chandran says.

### Diverse Opportunities

In addition to the Kinder Scholars Program, the Kinder Institute offers opportunities such as the Society of Fellows, which provides undergraduates with the chance to engage in a yearlong study of the foundation, historical development and the practice of constitutional democracy in the United States. A minor and a certificate in American Constitutional Democracy also are available, in addition to programs for graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral students.

"These are designed for students interested in exploring in depth the nation's constitutional and democratic traditions," says Justin Dyer, associate professor of political science and director of the Kinder Institute. "The Kinder Institute provides students the opportunity to explore the political, economic and cultural conditions that laid the groundwork for the American experiment."

During Homecoming weekend the Kinder Institute sponsored a standing-room-only lecture at the Missouri Theatre by historian and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner David McCullough, in which McCullough discussed the architects of the American democracy in a talk titled "The History You Don't Know: Lessons from the American Founders."

"He is the most distinguished narrative historian of his generation," said Dyer before the event. "We are excited to have him come to Missouri and share his insights on the history of this country and its founding."

The Kinder Institute also has sponsored lectures from author Jon Meacham and former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill. Before the lectures, students in the Kinder Institute have had the opportunity to meet the famous authors.

"I am so pumped about that," Franks says. "They set up special luncheons for us and we get to talk to people who have had these great careers." **M**

## Making Home

Rich Kinder's love of history started as a child, grew during his time at Mizzou, and blossomed as he founded and ran Kinder Morgan, the Houston-based energy infrastructure company.

He always attributes part of his business success to his history books, says his wife, Nancy. "He reads everything he can get his hands on," she said during an October 2015 reception following her and Rich's \$25 million donation to endow the Kinder Institute.

He has a soft spot for biographies of the Founding Fathers. They are deeply personal stories that guide his leadership style. Just describing their importance to him is emotional.

"I think those are," he says before choking back tears. He composes himself and continues. "Those really help you to understand the practical world better than any business guidebook. There are a lot of lessons to be learned from history and from people who made life-and-death decisions."

One of the biggest responsibilities of leadership is assembling a good team. Kinder takes his philosophy — seeking, above all, people who are smart, hard working and honest — straight from Lincoln. If you follow Lincoln's template, he says, "you can whip the world."