



## The **Philanthropist** Next Door

University campuses are peppered with buildings named for big benefactors, the people whose sizable gifts have helped propel higher education forward, often in tough economic times. But behind every major donor is a throng of everyday donors — alumni and community members, employees and retirees, families and clubs — whose contributions fuel our progress.

Call it crowdfunding. Call it kick-starting. Pooling resources has been a Mizzou tradition since the university's inception in 1839, when 900 Missourians pitched in to create an institute of higher learning in Boone County.

There's no such thing as a small gift. In the context of a \$2.2 billion annual budget, a donation of hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars might seem like a drop in the bucket. But by the time the \$1 billion *For All We Call Mizzou* campaign ended in 2008, gifts smaller than \$1,000 each totaled \$52.9 million for Mizzou. That's a significant bucketful, to which 378,270 donors each contributed a drop.

Meet six Tigers who have made gifts large and small. Each has a source of inspiration: honoring a loved one, paying it forward, keeping a program alive — or simply making the Mizzou experience a reality for the next generation.

Story by MIZZOU staff ❖ Illustrations by Jacqui Oakley



## Allison Howard Zupon

Allison Howard Zupon grew up in Auxvasse, Missouri, population 983. As a 10-year-old, Zupon knew she wanted to be a doctor but didn't know how to make that happen. As a teenager, Zupon didn't feel like she fit in among her peers, who weren't as interested in academics.

All of that began to change in 1999 when she attended Missouri Scholars Academy (MSA), a three-week program for 330 of Missouri's gifted high school students. The program, then free to participants, is held each summer on the Mizzou campus and is partially funded by the University of Missouri. Zupon studied Japanese, learned how to salsa dance and performed *The Taming of the Shrew* in the now-defunct Mark Twain Residence Hall pool.

"MSA was the first place where I learned to say yes to things," Zupon says.

It also propelled her toward Mizzou, where she studied biochemistry, attended medical school and reconnected with fellow MSA alumnus Ryan Zupon, BS ChE '05. As seniors at MU, the two became MSA resident assistants. They married in 2009.

Now a breast-imaging fellow at the University of Kansas Medical Center, Zupon, BS '05, MD '10, wants to help others to have an MSA experience. Although Zupon attended MSA for free, participants now pay a fee.

"If my parents had to pay for me to go to MSA, I might not have been able to go," says Zupon, who, along with her husband, has donated \$7,000 to the program. "MSA is a fantastic program that has the potential to draw and keep Missouri talent at Mizzou. That experience changed my life, and I'm a better person because of it." — **KA**



## Bryan Campbell

Bryan Campbell was always moving. When his father, Tim Campbell, walked in the door after work, he might see Bryan breakdancing or kicking a soccer ball. As a high school student, Bryan was an All-State runner in cross-country and track. So it was especially tough when, in 2001, he was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

But it didn't slow him down. Inspired by his grandfather, a successful businessman, Bryan decided to go to Mizzou and study finance. The day he moved to Columbia, he underwent his last chemotherapy treatment, hopped in his car, quickly opened the door to vomit, closed the door again and took off.

That's just how Bryan was. "He was focused," Tim says. At Mizzou, Bryan joined Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and was a team leader for the Special Olympics.

Bryan was studying abroad in Australia when the cancer relapsed. Despite enduring the pain of stem cell and bone marrow transplants, chemo, and radiation, Bryan, BS HES '06, graduated from Mizzou.

"The cancer treatments were painful and tiring," Tim says. "But, gee-whiz, that moment when he walked across the stage was heartwarming."

Bryan died Nov. 28, 2007, at 25. To keep his spirit alive, his family started the Bryan Thomas Campbell Foundation, which improves the quality of extended hospital stays for patients and funds leukemia research.

The foundation recently donated nearly \$60,000 to support the work of Kristen Taylor in MU's Department of Pathology and Anatomical Sciences. Her research looks at mechanisms that lead to leukemia and ways to tailor therapies to patients.

The gift provided vital resources for Taylor's laboratory and reinvigorated the team. "The people in my lab are working even harder now," Taylor says. "The work isn't as abstract anymore."

Tim is glad Bryan's legacy lives on at Mizzou. "We're all thankful for Bryan's experiences at Mizzou," Tim says. "He found a home there." — **KA**



## Steffani Pealer Lautenschlager

If there was a leadership position, Steffani Pealer Lautenschlager wanted it. As a Mizzou student, Lautenschlager, BA '00, was active in Kappa Kappa Gamma, Peer Rape Educators and Greeks Advocating the Mature Management of Alcohol. But when she applied for a position on the Panhellenic executive board, she wasn't selected.

Laura Hacquard, M Ed '80, assistant director of the Women's Center, reassured Lautenschlager that she didn't have to have a leadership position to make a difference. "She believed in me, so I believed in myself," Lautenschlager says.

Lautenschlager went on to become one of the first Greek Advocates, a group of students who raise awareness about relationship and sexual violence. She was also an LSV Honor Society inductee and Student Union Programming Board member.

Lautenschlager's experiences outside the classroom helped her get to where she is today. "It was the Student Affairs staff who invested time in me," says Lautenschlager, who worked as an adviser to Greek communities at various universities before becoming a fundraiser. "It was where I was challenged the most but also supported the most."

Lautenschlager gives to the Mizzou Student Experience Fund every month. As the director of development at City Academy — a private, independent elementary school in St. Louis that offers scholarship support to all students — Lautenschlager knows how much every \$100 can help.

"That gift can make a big impact and is just as needed as the gifts of \$50,000 or \$1 million," says Lautenschlager, now a member of Mizzou's Student Affairs Alumni Development Board. "Our students are really thriving from the dollars given in this area. The Mizzou student experience changes lives." — **KA**



## Ed Smith

"There's a whole world out there," Ed Smith says, a self-evident truth demanding, in Smith's mind, that college students go out and experience that world as part of their studies. He can't point to the exact moment of his conversion to that view. He didn't study abroad during his own college career, though his son Cameron, BS BA '15, went on a short-term trip during his. But by the time Smith was talking to MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin in December 2014, it was a fully formed idea in his mind.

The Chesterfield, Missouri, business owner wanted to support study-abroad students with endowed scholarships. During his conversations about how to best do that, Loftin also mentioned Operation Passport.

Operation Passport guarantees that if an incoming freshman applies for a passport and brings it in by a certain date, that student will receive a \$135 scholarship (the cost of the passport). Students also can register their email addresses and their parents' addresses with the MU International Center so staff can reach them about study-abroad opportunities.

Already having a passport makes it easier for students to say yes to those opportunities.

Smith, who owns American Direct, a direct-response advertising agency, loved the concept and created and funded the 2015 Operation Passport mailings.

"It is important to start planning for study abroad, and the first important step is to get a passport," he says. — **EP**



## Okeleke Nzeogwu

In 1970, when Okeleke (Peter) Nzeogwu emerged from a Biafran refugee camp in eastern Nigeria, he was 16 years old and had missed nearly three years of school. The Nigerian civil war had just ended, leaving more than 3 million people dead and the country in shambles. His family, he says, was penniless.

It was then that Nzeogwu procured his first scholarship. A European philanthropist had established a fund to educate refugee children, and Nzeogwu and his sister were among those chosen to attend Mayflower School, a private high school in western Nigeria. "Education was an escape out of poverty, and scholarships were — wow," Nzeogwu says. "Without scholarships, I don't think I would have gone far."

Nzeogwu finished his secondary education and, with another scholarship, a one-year college. An academically ambitious student, he performed so well on exams that he qualified for a Nigerian-government-funded scholarship to study chemical engineering abroad. That's when he became a Tiger.

At Mizzou, Nzeogwu earned a bachelor's degree and two master's degrees before returning to Nigeria. Then, following a 1983 military coup, Nzeogwu (once a Tiger, always a Tiger) came back to Columbia, this time to pursue a doctorate in economics. He had no money, but Residential Life employee Shirley Nichols offered him housing on credit, and mathematics Professor Carl Morris offered him a teaching assistantship. "I received so much from all the people who were mentors and inspired me and gave me opportunities," he says.

Three decades years later, Professor Nzeogwu, BS ChE '76, MBA, MS '80, PhD '88, directs the MBA program at Roseman University of Health Sciences in Nevada. He has never forgotten Mizzou generosity. To pay it forward, this year he and his wife gave \$30,000 to establish the endowed STEM Opportunity Scholarship Fund for future Mizzou students. "I consider myself a Missourian," he says. — **KP**



## Elmer "Dub" Brown

Elmer "Dub" Brown was born and raised on a small farm near the headwaters of the Little Saline Creek between Eldon and Tuscumbia, Missouri. His father died when he was 2, and Brown attended a one-room school through eighth grade before earning a diploma at Tuscumbia High School.

When Brown's best friend announced he was headed to Mizzou for an engineering degree, Brown followed suit.

"My mother said, 'Oh, I don't know if we can afford that,'" says Brown, BS Ag '53, MS '65. "So I said, 'Not to worry! I will work my way through.'"

He bused and waited tables at the Ever Eat Café (current location of The Heidelberg), shelved books at Ellis Library, and even relocated to Michigan in the summer to work for contractors at the Detroit Edison Co. where his brothers were employed.

"They didn't have the scholarships back then that they have now," says Brown, a retired Miller Brewing Co. training and development manager who also spent 21 years in the U.S. Army. "I decided along the way that if I had the opportunity to help students in need, I would do so."

Brown now funds two scholarships: one in honor of his late first wife, Mary Impey Brown, BS Ed '52, and another in honor of his family, parents Agnes and Robert and his sisters Kathleen, Marie and Jean. — **MW**