Song of renewal

Homecoming '93 sings the praises of cultural diversity as MU celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Legion of Black Collegians.

The Golden Girls, top, light up an Oct. 15 pep rally.
Rob Hill photo

Above, Chancellor Charles Kiesler honors Preston Ingram at an Oct. 17 convocation demonstrating MU’s recommitment to diversity.
Nancy O'Connor photo

Right, parade grand marshals Norris Stevenson, BS Ed '61, M Ed '63, left, and Mel West, BS Ed '61, M Ed '69, were MU’s first African-American football players.
Rob Hill photo

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Top, student director Lance Richardson leads the LBC Gospel Reunion Choir and soloist Mia Easterling, Arts '91, during the benefit concert Oct. 16.

Above, Angela Hines, left, a fourth-year veterinary medicine student from St. Louis, boogies with the Blind Boone Highsteppers at the Black Alumni Organization's pregame brunch.

Right, Darin Blasier, BS ChE '93, plays in the Marching Mizzou Alumni Band's pregame performance at Homecoming '93.

Rob Hill photos

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We are building toward a future in which the injustices of the past are truly in the past," said Chancellor Charles Kiesler at the Oct. 17 convocation honoring 16 African Americans who, because they were denied admission to MU more than 40 years ago, helped pave the way to greater equality at MU. Honored from St. Louis were Odessa T. Bush, Preston D. Ingram, Ivan C. James Jr., Robert E. James, Nina P. Lewis, Dr. Lawrence E. Nicholson, Marian O. Oldham, Frederick P. Stark, Maxine L. Stark, Thelma Broome Swann, Eulalia T. Taylor and Arthur L. Washington. Also recognized were Isaac Gardner Jr. of Kansas City, Hobart R. Halsey of Jefferson City, Ruth Alexander of New Orleans accepting for the late Robert Alexander and Lela Shanks of Lincoln, Neb., accepting for Hughes H. Shanks.

According to Black Alumni Organization President Mark Miller, BS '78, MS '82, "This was an opportunity for black alumni to reunite with this University and for the University to relate to black alumni in a meaningful way. Maybe we will finally close this chapter in the University's history." Miller, with financial support from the MU Alumni Association, was the impetus behind the multicultural events that included current and former members of the LBC Gospel Choir and Lincoln University's Gospel Choir singing the national anthem before the game, where nearly 37,000 people watched the Tigers beat the Oklahoma State Cowboys 42-9. That night the choirs gave a benefit concert to raise money for scholarships. Choirs from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and Columbia joined them. Other events included the house decoration contest, a blood drive where 2,823 pints were collected, the building of the Habitat for Humanity Student Chapter's second house, a carnival in the Hearnes Center and the Multicultural Extravaganza, where MU students showed off their talents.

Homecoming comes once a year, but high jinks are popular all year. Isn't it time you fessed up about your college pranks? What do you have to lose? You've earned your diploma. Let us hear from you by Dec. 15, and we'll report on the best (or worst) shenanigans in an upcoming issue. Don't forget to include a daytime phone number, in case we need more details.

Help us gather MU facts for this alumni poll. Fax Missouri Alumni at [314] 882-7290, or mail to MU Fax, 407 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, Mo. 65211. Include your name, degree, graduation date, address and telephone number.