



Jim Curley/Columbia Daily Tribune

At the president's home, south of the Campus, Magrath poses in front of a portrait of the first University of Missouri president, John Hiram Lathrop. Magrath will be the 17th.

University Attracts Peter Magrath

By Steve Shinn

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, the curators did well. They selected, as the new president of the University of Missouri, C. Peter Magrath, current president of the University of Minnesota and one of the bright stars of higher education.

Magrath (pronounced Magraw) takes over at Missouri Jan. 1, replacing James C. Olson, who retired July 1. Serving in the interim is Melvin D. George, the University's vice president for academic affairs.

Olson had announced his impending retirement more than a year ago, and the curators set up the traditional, elaborate procedure involving campus and system screening and search committees to find his successor. The procedure failed—all four finalists withdrew their names from consideration. In May, the curators took over the search themselves. On June 18 they introduced the 51-year-old Magrath at a news conference in Columbia.

Around Missouri the reaction was one of pleasant surprise. After a year that produced frustration, how had the curators attracted a person of Magrath's stature?

At Minnesota he leads a five-campus system with 60,000 students. He also serves as the chief executive officer of the flagship Minneapolis campus, which has nearly 50,000 students, twice that of UMC.

During his 10 years at Minnesota,

Magrath is credited with guiding that university through a financial crunch as rough or rougher than that faced by Missouri, with instituting a model planning process that resulted in reductions in some programs and enhancement of others, with maintaining a powerful program of legislative relations and with bringing Minnesota to the top of public universities in private giving. The 1983 private-gift total is listed as \$62.3 million, more than four times that of Missouri's.

STEVE ROSZELL, a Mizzou alumnus and former director of alumni activities at UMC, is now associate vice president for alumni and development at Minnesota. He has worked closely with Magrath.

"His recognition of the need for a strong alumni association and his commitment to increased voluntary support attracted me to Minnesota in 1979," Roszell says. "During the difficult state financial situation over the past four years, Peter has become more committed to the vital role alumni will play in the future of public universities."

There are some critics—after 10 years, it would be amazing if there weren't. But most apparently agree with the editorial writer of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, who commented that Magrath "has not overstayed his welcome, and the university would continue to be well-led if he remained. Mr. Magrath has been a very good president, in part, because he is a very decent man."

At the Columbia news conference, Magrath simply said that he is leaving Minnesota because he believed his work there was finished. "This is a good time, then, for me to accept a new challenge in a new place."

His salary at Missouri will be \$100,000 a year. At Minnesota it is \$95,000. Olson was paid \$80,000.

Magrath said that he plans to pursue three general objectives at Missouri:

- A commitment to a realistic planning process that leads to specific, coordinated efforts to build and improve selected programs and activities.
- Improvement of the financial support of the University from the private sector.
- To personally tell the University



Diane Magrath plays an active role as First Lady. She also is co-editor of the book, *The President's Spouse: Volunteer or Volunteered.*



Magrath has a strong interest in alumni relations. Here, he addresses alumni at the Minnesota Alumni Association's Leaders' Day.



At the press conference announcing his appointment, Magrath greets President Emeritus Elmer Ellis, the first chief executive to head the four-campus system.

of Missouri story by showing how it contributes to the state's bright future.

"We have an obligation to show and tell our story," says Magrath, "not for the University's sake but for the state's sake, for it is a vital ingredient in Missouri's economic and cultural prosperity."

BEFORE MINNESOTA, Magrath was president of the State University of New York at Binghamton from 1972 to 1974. From 1968 to 1972 he was a faculty member and administrator at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, serving as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and vice chancellor for academic affairs. He taught political science at Brown University from 1961 to 1968 and was associate dean of the Graduate School there in 1965 and 1966.

A native of New York, he earned a bachelor's degree *summa cum laude* in

political science from the University of New Hampshire and a doctorate from Cornell University.

Magrath is chairman of the executive committee and a member of the international affairs committee of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, composed of the nation's major public universities; and chairman of the graduate education committee and member of the executive committee of the Association of American Universities, an organization of many of the nation's best institutions of higher education.

Magrath and his wife, Diane, were married in 1978, and he recognizes her as a partner in the University presidency. He has a daughter, Valerie, from his first marriage, and a daughter, "Mo," a fifth grader, who came with his marriage to Diane. Monette's nickname, he notes, matches her new state's initials. □