

LIVING LEGENDS

By KAREN WORLEY

Living legends is an overused expression, to be sure. But in this case it fits. 🎓 To achieve immortality, some people write a book. Others have children or build buildings to attach their names to. 🎓 In addition to naming buildings for people who have devoted large sums of money or for political figures who have been particularly supportive, the University has honored another select group. Their contributions go beyond a monetary value. They've donated their careers, their lives to 'Ol Mizzou. 🎓 These four living, former faculty members didn't ask for this special form of recognition. They earned it.

ELLIS:
'The University has a beginning, but it has no end'



DR. ELMER ELLIS supports the idea that Campus buildings should not be named for living faculty members.

Noting one institution that now has a building named for a convicted felon, Ellis, now 81, says, "Life goes on, and you may regret it later." Besides, he says, "You have so many more deserving people than buildings."

In 1971, the Board of Curators approved the naming of the library for the former University president. Ellis, who joined the staff in 1930 as an assistant professor of history, served as dean of the College of Arts and Science and retired as president of the University system in 1966, objected. "I think the rule's a good rule and think the Board could've stuck by it."

In the scheme of things, though, it's appropriate that the library should be named for Ellis, a native North Dakotan who fed himself through college by working in his state university's library for 25 cents an hour. "If you grow up in a family of 12, you don't have much help."

A man with such humble beginnings turned out to be a statesman with great visions for the University. But he never lost his common touch.

One who believes higher education should be available to anyone who is capable of it and can use it, Ellis led the development of the University into a four-campus system in the early '60s to meet the educational needs of the state. He also put together the first office at a major university with complete authority for scholarships, loans and part-time jobs, says Allan Purdy, former director of scholarships and student financial aids.

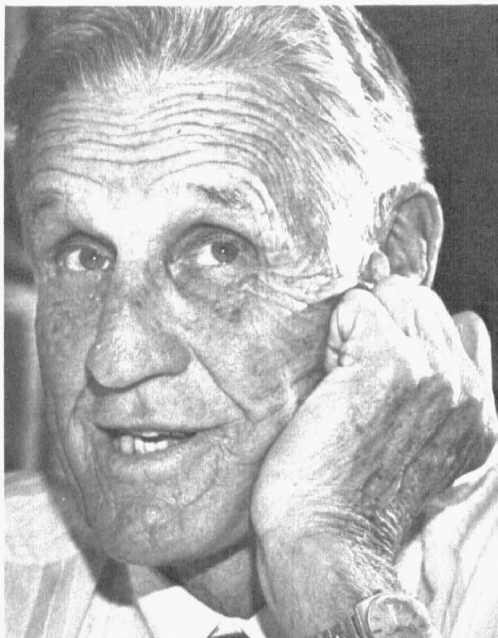
One who believes a good library can attract quality faculty as well as support graduate and research programs, Ellis put money where his mouth was. During his tenure, the library acquired volumes that put it over the million mark, developing outstanding collections that put it "right up there with Yale, Princeton and the University of Michigan," says Dr. Ralph Parker, dean emeritus of the School of Library and Informational Science.

Cultivating new areas, Ellis also initiated the idea for a Friends of the Library organization to support a rare books collection. "Although he was never president of the Friends," Parker says, "he was one of the best 'friends' the library ever had."

The east library addition was a result of Ellis' leadership in the passage of the \$75 million state bond issue in 1956. Fine arts,

business, agriculture, electrical engineering, and arts and science buildings also were included in the massive building program that readied the Campus for the crush of post-World War II baby boomers.

Although his hearing and eyesight aren't what they used to be, Ellis enjoys good health, which he attributes to his wife's good cooking. These days, he maintains a third floor Jesse Hall office and runs "a good many errands for many people." In his typical unpretentious style, Ellis maintains, "My name is probably more important than I am."



DON FAUROT measures his health in terms of his sporting hobbies: he can shoot 18 holes of golf, hunt half a day and fish all day long.

The gray-haired, jut-jawed, 80-year-old long-legged landmark didn't have time for such loves during his "eight days a week" service to Mizzou as head football coach from 1935-56 — except for three years in the Navy during World War II — and director of athletics from 1956-67. At the tail end of his athletic career, the University's goodwill ambassador also put in five years with the Alumni Association, working with his former quarterback, Bus Entsminger, now vice chancellor for alumni relations and development. Faurot Field was named in 1972.

In 1941 Faurot created and openly shared the split or sliding T formation, a quarterback option play that lives on today. "It did revolutionize offense a little bit," the modest Faurot admits.

If Faurot had a fault, says former assis-

FAUROT:
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tant coach Harry Smith, it's that "we did lose a few football games, but it was unintentional." One of Faurot's greatest strengths, says Bob Broeg, former *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sports editor and now assistant to the publisher, was his "tough hide. He has a great ability to shrug off criticism."

Tight-fisted money management, combined with the philosophy that "people will come to see good teams," Faurot scheduled away-games that pitted Mizzou against tougher opponents. He talks about opening seven seasons in a row at Ohio State. "Although we never beat them, we always got a good check to help pay off our debt and build our stadium." He turned a \$500,000 debt in 1935 into a \$1 million profit by 1956, despite expansions that more than doubled stadium seating.

His 19-year career record is 164 wins, 92 losses and 13 ties.

"We ran a good, honest, sincere program and people appreciated that," Faurot says.

A believer in homegrown talent, Faurot thought Missouri football should be played by Missouri boys. "Missouri boys had more loyalty to the school and could develop better spirit that's necessary to win," says Faurot, BS Ag '24, MS '25, who was one of four Faurot brothers to letter in football at Mizzou.

Faurot is in his Hearnes office every weekday morning he's in town. He recruits north team members for the Blue-Gray game, and with his wife, Mary, travels on Missouri Senior Golf Association trips. They have three grown daughters and eight grandchildren.

Faurot attributes his longevity to "hard work and clean living." The fact that his father lived well into his 90s probably hasn't hurt, either.

The closest the tectotaler ever got to the bubbly was his master's thesis on how to prune grapes. "I didn't think drinking would help my coaching," Faurot says, "and when I retired, I was too old to start."



Charlie Leight/Columbia Daily Tribune

McKee's 94th birthday on Nov. 8 at Candle Light Lodge. She charms visitors with her keen wit. Unfortunately, her favorite hobbies of reading the newspaper, listening to sports broadcasts and corresponding with graduates, have become more difficult because of her failing vision and hearing.

Her high standards, superb athletic skills and genuine concern for others commanded respect and admiration from all who associated with "Miss McKee," as she is commonly known.

"She turned out graduates that were the best," says Ruby Cline, a colleague of McKee's for several decades. "Any superintendent who got one of her graduates wanted another one the first chance he could."

One of those first students, Columbian Dorothy Holsinger, BS Ed'26, M Ed'61, agrees, "You could get good jobs with Mary McKee's recommendation, but you didn't put anything over on her." Wearing bloomers under clothes on the way to the gym, for instance, was a faux pas. McKee, who was always immaculately coiffed and well dressed, expected no less from her students and staff.

Even though she was stern, she also was fair. As chairman of Student Affairs for Women from 1934-38, McKee recalls she "had to reprimand students once in a while." The tone of her voice indicates it wasn't her favorite activity.

McKEE:
'To help students as much as I could, that was my job'

MARY McKEE'S alumni stay in touch so faithfully that the health and physical education department uses her Christmas list to update its files.

That list came in handy another time, too. In 1973, when the faculty initiated a drive to name the women's gymnasium after McKee, a flood of letters from alumni overwhelmed Chancellor Herbert Schooling.

"I got a letter just the other day," happily reports McKee, who was head of women's physical education from 1923-59. With ice cream and cake, former students, faculty and staff members celebrated

McKee never married, preferring to spend time contributing to the Campus, the Catholic Church and the community. Besides volunteer service to her sorority, Alpha Chi Omega, the American Red Cross and Boone Hospital Center, McKee initiated a faculty recreation night in

1936. Dr. Newell Gingrich, 76, professor emeritus of physics, continues playing badminton on Monday nights to this day. McKee "was a very good smasher," Gingrich recalls. Adds Holsinger, "She used to beat those men."

BECAUSE OF A LARYNGECTOMY, John "Hi" Simmons may be rusty with delivery, but his sense of humor still has the spark of a leadoff double.

Simmons' dry wit and biting sarcasm helped keep his players loose all the way to 11 conference titles and six trips to the College World Series. The colorful coach, a member of baseball's Hall of Fame and former president of the National Baseball Association, has a career record of 481 victories and 284 defeats. Seven of Simmons' proteges played in the major leagues.

"I don't think coaches are so damn good," says the person who spearheaded Mizzou baseball for 34 years (except for several years in the U.S. Navy) from 1935-73. "The players are the ones who should have the recognition," says Simmons, 77, for whom Simmons Field was named in 1973, the year he retired.

Simmons' earthy way with the English language reduced complicated thoughts into simple English. His reference to a "Hollywood stance" would quickly correct a player's batting flaw. And then there's the bat grip "so tight that sawdust runs out of the end of it."

His entertaining style captured his players' attention. "He'd get the point across without upsetting the guy," says Charles Paulsell, BJ '50, former *Columbia Daily Tribune* sportswriter. Don Faurot, who recruited Simmons, agrees with Paulsell's assessment and also notes Simmons' recruitment of high school grid prospects who wanted to compete in both sports. "Some of my greatest players never had spring practice," Faurot says.

As a scout, Simmons painted clear, classic pictures of Tiger opponents: "Now SMU doesn't have any linebackers," he'd drawl. "They have these two white-faced steers." Another team has a five-man defensive line that would like to play a six-man line, but "one of 'em would be out of bounds."

Former "boys," as he called his players, note mannerisms almost as famous as Simmons' words. A sly smile creeps on his face right before delivering a snappy one-



SIMMONS:
*'I did manage
to keep 'em
loose'*

liner, says Gene McArtor, BS Ed '63, M Ed '64, PhD '72, who played for Simmons from 1961-63 and became coach when Simmons retired. "That made it funny before he ever said anything."

Also a master of the malaprop, Simmons describes a short stop having a bad day as "abhorrible."

"It may not be in the dictionary," says McArtor of the gravel-tongued comic's vocabulary, "but the players knew what he meant.

"For all his gruffness," McArtor adds, "I never saw a coach who could charm a recruit or his parents like Hi could."

Simmons and his wife, Jan, raised three sons, all of whom served as bat boys and one, John, a short stop on Simmons' 1964 World Series team. They have five grandchildren.

These days, Simmons loves to think about hunting, fishing and golf. Because he can't walk "worth a damn," he resorts to watching sports on television. □