

Although we've been unable to establish a direct connection, we'll take the credit, anyway. The *Alumnus*, you'll remember, published a women's lib article last issue. Later that month, Mrs. Avis Tucker of Warrensburg became the first woman ever to head the University's Board of Curators. And in Washington, D.C., Congresswoman Martha Wright Griffiths was elected president of the Washington chapter of the Alumni Association.

The *Alumnus*'s story, "Woman Power at Ol' Mizzou," was written by Ms. (yeah, that's the way she wanted it) Anne Skelton, but Ye Old Ed took the liberty to add a paragraph about some research being done by Mrs. Murrell Wilson Jr. A frosty phone call from one of the campus's women "militants" informed him that the reference should have been to Ms. Sally Wilson; husband Murrell had nothing to do with it.

Incidentally, Anne has joined the *Alumnus* staff as an associate editor, as has Ms. (they're really both Mrs., folks) Sue Hale. They succeed Ginny Glass and Betty Brophy, who did a very un-woman's-lib-like thing and went with their husbands when they graduated and left Columbia last spring.—S. S.

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By Steve Shinn

PRESIDENT WITH A COMMON TOUCH

The only discernible difference between Brice Ratchford, interim president, and Brice Ratchford, permanent president, was that in mid-August he and his family moved into the new presidential home on a scenic bluff overlooking the Hinkson. □ This quiet transition was not particularly surprising, however. □ Last October, the Board of Cuartors made it crystal clear that Ratchford as interim president would not be a caretaker, but should move the University aggressively forward. It was a charge taken to heart. Ratchford led a successful budget presentation in Jefferson City— at least from the standpoint of the University getting its fair share of the dollars available — initiated a sweeping institutional reappraisal, and guided the new Kansas City Medical School to the point of reality. When the permanent appointment came late in June, no shift was required in the level of activity. The new president already was operating in high. □ Then, there's the Ratchford style itself. Although he possesses an abundance of nervous energy, his manner in dealing with others is low key, and he operates without fanfare. There will not, for example, be an elaborate presidential inauguration — at Ratchford's own request. His is an open, direct style that wears well, and the rapport he had previously established with legislators, alumni, and the members of the University community as vice president for extension was maintained. Few, if any, were surprised, therefore, when his name rose to the top in a com-

plex selection process that included alumni representation.

But surprise or no, the chief executive and academic officer of the University of Missouri sparks considerable interest. So it also is understandable that Ratchford has been a favorite subject of newspaper reporters and radio and television newsmen throughout the state.

"He speaks with a trace of Southern drawl from his native North Carolina and favors down-to-earth terminology over educational gobbledygook," noted Sue Ann Wood in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Jerry Venters of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch pointed out that Ratchford "smokes a pipe and is distinguished by a bow tie worn on all occasions. He is an early riser and works long hours . . ."

". . . at age 50," observed Pat Doyle of the Kansas City Star, "his waistline is going a little paunchy while his pale blue eyes and cropped silvery hair stand out from a face ruddied by the sun. . ."

The bow tie dates from 1948 or 1949 when Ratchford and a group of other assistant professors at North Carolina State each decided to buy one just to see what their wives would say. Apparently, Mrs. Ratchford responded favorably. He also is devoted to white shirts, but there is a more pragmatic reason for them.

"I'm color blind," he explains, "and I have enough trouble finding a tie that matches my suit without worrying about coordinating a colored or striped shirt, too."

Ratchford's plain talk, his work habits, his bent for the outdoors, and even his appearance make it easy to find considerable agreement with Miss Doyle's statement that, "The new president still has a touch of the country boy about him."

It's this image, plus his national reputation as an extension administrator, that probably cause some persons to view his strengths as administrative, rather than academic. But a look at the record shows this is a mistake.

Ratchford graduated at the top of his class at North Carolina State and received a PhD from Duke in economics. He is a member of both Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi. And he has published extensively. While pointing out that there is no way to separate the academic and administrative requirements of the presidency, Ratchford also says



New presidential home is located south of Memorial Stadium on Hinkson bluff. At far right, the Ratchfords discuss rocking patio area with landscape architect Will Summers.



In spring and summer, Ratchford enjoys working in his half-acre vegetable garden. Below, Dr. and Mrs. Ratchford and daughter Mary have an after-work cup of coffee.



quietly, "I have no reservations about my academic credentials. I understand academia."

He also understands the realities of Missouri politics. It's this understanding that enables him to be sincerely disappointed with the \$90 million appropriation for the University in legislative session just passed, while still recognizing that "we were treated as well as the other agencies. You just cannot expect the state to do more for any one agency proportionately to other agencies. There are needs in health, welfare, corrections, too, and as long as we are getting a decent shake, I can't fuss with the legislature.

"But, at the same time, you cannot get something for nothing. We need a higher level of services for everything. If we relate our taxes to our ability to pay, Missouri is way down among the states. And as long as we are low, we will not have the level of services we need."

He points out that, except for emergency items, no money for physical facilities has been appropriated in four years. "If we never took another student," he says, "there are some facilities we desperately need — a vet med complex at Columbia, a mines and metallurgy building at Rolla, a science building at St. Louis, and a law building at Kansas City. We need library additions at Columbia, Kansas City, and St. Louis, and some books to make use of the new facility we have at Rolla."

The Columbia Daily Tribune, located as it is in the city with the oldest campus, has long relished the role of a University watchdog. It worried editorially whether Ratchford's grasp of the political realities of Missouri might lead him to settle for something less than excellence in University programs.

"In terms of funding — federal funding, state, and foundations — the golden age of expectations that existed from about '58 to '68 is over," says Ratchford. "It is ridiculous to think that we can be truly excellent in all fields; it is ridiculous for us to pursue such a course. At the same time, however, no low-quality programs will be tolerated.

"I suggest that a reasonable and obtainable goal is staying equal in all programs to other institutions of our type in the Midwest — the Big Eight and Big Ten schools, for example — with selected peaks of excellence where we are as good as or better than any in the world."



This means the University must assess its existing programs and set its priorities. Some programs may be dropped, others expanded, some added. It's all a part of the institutional reappraisal mentioned earlier.

Begun almost as soon as Ratchford became interim president, the reappraisal has involved a wide cross section of University faculty and administrators, and their reports on the mission of the University, program, resources, organization, and governance are now being studied by the president.

Ultimately, probably yet this fall, the role and scope of each unit's program — including those of the departments — will be written down. And, ultimately, the organizational structure and the relationships among the President's Office, the campuses, divisions, and, again, the departments will be specifically spelled out.

It is no secret that over the past five years there has been considerable uncertainty as to the proper degree of campus autonomy, and the proper role of University-wide staff. Ratchford points out, however, that the uncertainty over who is responsible for what also exists within the campuses, within the schools and colleges, even the departments.

Ratchford believes that the president clearly has the responsibility for allocating functions and funds, for auditing all programs, for insisting on responsible actions, and for establishing uniformity when necessary — in admission requirements, for example. All campuses will have some programs in common; each campus will have some programs that are unique to it.

However, he has "an abiding philosophy, which I followed in extension, that decisions should be made at the lowest possible unit. That doesn't stop at the chancellor, but also extends to the deans and the faculty."

This administrative philosophy helped him mold the Extension Division — the University's service arm — into an organization that is, according to the National University Extension Association, "a model for other extension units throughout the country and the world."

Ratchford came to the University in 1959 as director of the Missouri Agriculture Service. He became dean of the Extension Division in 1960, and was elected a vice president in 1965.

Traveling 50,000 miles around Missouri the

first year on the job, Ratchford quickly became acquainted with the state and its people. He brought all the University's off-campus courses and all non-credit courses under the same direction, expanded the scope of extension to include not only the farm but also the city, and reorganized the service around 20 regional planning units, partially eliminating the traditional county organization.

The program brought him national recognition and the Distinguished Service Award from the United States Department of Agriculture, the highest honor given by the department. The program also made him a few enemies in Missouri agriculture.

"Any time you institute change," says Ratchford, "some people don't like it, and a few of these never get over it."

At Missouri, extension is a University-wide activity, administered almost like a fifth campus. But as a University vice president, Ratchford also served on the President's Council, which made him intimately familiar with other administrative, financial, and educational activities. His University experience is broader, therefore, than extension alone, but it undoubtedly is his farm background that helps make him, as he puts it, "totally committed to the land-grant concept of public higher education. I am a true product of that system."

Charles Brice (the Brice is an old family name) Ratchford was born in the Piedmont country near Raleigh, North Carolina, on a 200-acre farm that, he says, would remind you of the Ozarks. About half of it was timber, about half used for general farming — with mule power.

A frequent visitor was the county agent. The youthful Ratchford saw that the agent was doing the kind of work that he, too, could do and enjoy — and he noted that in those depression days, the county agent had a job.

It was as a 4-Her that Ratchford made his first visit to a college campus, a land-grant school, North Carolina State. Although few from his area attended college, his parents, both high school graduates, had the typical middle class desire for their children to go, and both Ratchford and his sister attended and graduated.

He worked for about half his expenses in a National Youth Administration program that paid him \$15 a month. But he was grateful for the free Sunday night suppers at the Presbyterian

Church, not only for the food, but also because that was where he met his future wife, Betty. She had been a student at nearby Peace College, and was then working as a secretary. They were engaged in 1941, three weeks before Pearl Harbor, and married June 13, 1942.

He entered the Army later that year, serving two of his four years in the Far East with the Office of Strategic Service and rising through the ranks from private to captain.

In 1946 Ratchford returned to North Carolina State as an assistant professor and a farm management specialist. The next year he received his master of science degree in ag economics, and took time out from his work in extension at North Carolina State to get the doctor's degree from Duke in 1951. In 1954 he became assistant director of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at State, where he served until 1959, the year he came to Missouri.

The Ratchfords have two children, Charles, 19, who is working in Columbia, and Mary Eloise, 14, a ninth grader at West Junior High.

The new president is an avid bird hunter in the fall, primarily quail, and an ardent vegetable gardener in the spring and summer, but Mrs. Ratchford says her husband's real hobby is work.

As the 15th president of the University of Missouri, he will find work aplenty while he seeks, as he told the June graduates at Columbia, for "your alma mater . . . vision and planning which will move the University to the forefront as a dynamic and progressive institution." □



**In the office
at night, or walking
in the timber,
a man needs time
to be alone.**

