

Paul Christman . . .

would have graduated from Missouri this spring, and that never-before published story can tell you a lot about the character of Missouri's premier all-American and the affection he felt for his University.

You see, what with the War and marriage and a job, Paul got away from Columbia five hours short of a degree. It obviously didn't keep him from becoming highly successful, but he was never happy about it. So on one of his trips to the campus a year or so ago, he asked whether there was some way he could earn those final five hours. There was, and an independent study program was arranged. Paul was working on the last 2½-hour course this semester.

Paul Christman, of course, was a Missouri legend long before he died on March 2. To thousands of Tiger fans who never saw him play, he symbolized football greatness at Missouri, and there hadn't been much of that before he arrived. To those hundreds of alumni around the country and friends around the campus who knew him well — who knew how freely he had given of his time and energies over the years for Ol' Mizzou — he simply symbolized greatness. —S.S.

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By
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Watkins

POSU: THE THINKING MAN'S POLL

How does Missouri evaluate the President of the United States? What are the health characteristics of Missouri inhabitants? What is the religiosity of St. Louis scholars?

Such questions are answered by the Public Opinion Survey Unit of the School of Business and Public Administration Research Center on the Columbia campus. POSU's staff of about 150, most of them housewives employed part time, conducts surveys in or near Missouri for scholars, public agencies and private organizations who wish to gather or analyze social data.

Established in September 1964, POSU was one of the first survey organizations with statewide focus. There are now about 15 across the nation.

Dr. David Leuthold, POSU program director, explains the two functions of the Survey Unit as service to scholars on campus and methodological studies for gathering of data for the social sciences. The Survey Unit is available to all four campuses of the University. Surveys conducted or being conducted by POSU are of many varieties. Some contain opinions on national, state and local candidates; others give an evaluation of liberalism vs. conservatism; many show expectations of governmental services; a few give opinions on government regulations and perceptions of smoking habits.

One study examines the legal research process among a sample of Missouri attorneys, and another permits accurate estimates of total motorboat fuel consumption.

POSU differs from commercial survey companies in several ways. For one, academic survey organizations are usually more precise and thus cost more. Commercial organizations may rely solely on telephone interviews, but 10 per cent of Missourians have no phones, and another 8 per cent have unlisted phones. Academic organizations like POSU may also use telephone interviews but will try to supplement them with personal interviews in households without listed phones. Another difference is that data collected by POSU are public. That is, anybody can use them. Commercial surveys do not always make their findings available, and if they do, interpretation is sometimes difficult. Concerns are a third difference. POSU's concerns are research rather than immediately practical. A primary concern of POSU is discovering new knowledge.

Through the University's Office of Public Information, POSU provides state news media with



POSU program director Dr. David Leuthold, above, discusses a data gathering survey with Dina Nath Bedi, supervisor of data archives and technical services section. At left, a POSU interviewer talks with Columbian Mrs. Guy Schupp.

reports based upon secondary analysis of the program's data. The *Missouri Poll* reports deal with state and national issues in reference to Missourians' socioeconomic, political and dispositional characteristics. Presently, they are carried by about 130 Missouri newspapers and have been summarized by numerous television newscasters.

The *Missouri Poll* articles prove to be quite valuable and informative, Leuthold says. For example, one secondary analysis showed that the Negroes of Missouri, while constituting only 10 per cent of the state's population, make up 20 per cent of the total number of votes in Democratic primary elections. Since Democratic nominees usually win



Student staff, left to right, Joan Gallini, Martin Hensen, Chhaya Bedi, and Sharon Scarbrough, code data taken from a St. Louis survey of voter attitudes about a tax increase.

in the general state election, Negroes may be able to exercise more influence than their numbers would indicate.

Still another Missouri poll found the state divided on the issue of capital punishment. In 1968, for the first time in the nation's history, not one execution took place. Last year POSU asked the question, "Do you think Missouri should continue to have capital punishment or should it be abolished?" Of those surveyed, 50 per cent said it should be continued, 40 per cent said it should be abolished and nine per cent had no opinion. Generally speaking, the greater the individual's income, the more likely he was to favor continuation of capital punishment.

Internally, POSU is divided into four sections: sampling, field, coding and technical services and

data archives. Leuthold and Dr. Sarah Boggs, assistant director, coordinate these sections.

The sampling section, supervised by Professor Bernard Lazerwitz, confers with clients on the needs of the particular survey and draws samples as required. A statewide master sample, maintained by this section, is drawn so that all non-institutionalized state citizens have equal chances of being chosen.

The sampling section includes the St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield, Joplin and Columbia/ Jefferson City metropolitan areas in addition to 21 counties which represent the rest of Missouri.

The field section has about 125 part-time interviewers and is under the direction of Mrs. Dorothy Rosen. The interviewers are located throughout the state and have undergone a comprehensive training program. In addition to this initial orienting, they meet for retraining sessions before each survey. These interviewers are experienced in collecting information from public records.

The technical services section administers the Survey Unit's archives and develops computer programs as well as assists scholars in analyzing data. Containing over 300,000 card images of data, the archives provide unique resources for social research at relatively low cost.

The cost of these studies depends upon the services requested, the number and length of interviews and the complexity of the sample and related factors. Cost has ranged from less than \$1000 to more than \$75,000. Statewide surveys of probability samples of the adult population cost about \$30 to \$50 per interview. This includes costs of consultation, pre-testing, interviewing, coding and preliminary tabulations.

Financing for studies conducted by POSU has come from the Graduate School, the Research Center, state and federal agencies, foundations, non-profit organizations, corporations and other sections of the University.

Study directors are responsible for each research problem within a survey. These directors are usually faculty members who work in conjunction with each section supervisor to draw up and perform the types of surveys needed to solve research problems. Last year POSU compiled or prepared data for more than 30 scholars from 11 departments on this campus, for two professors on the St. Louis campus and one University of Michigan professor. □