



*First mixer of the new school year. The two camps keep their distance while making a cautious survey of the situation.*

## ‘Getting to know you...’

By Mike Miner

The University's campus at Columbia, where residence halls are constantly being built in an effort to keep pace with the mushrooming enrollment, proves a little overwhelming to many a freshman when he arrives in September.

Most of the newcomers are assigned a letter and room number and move into a house or corridor in one of the halls—and into a group of strangers. Loneliness and a feeling of insecurity are inevitable.

The beginning student eventually weathers this torment, of course. He finds his group of friends, his classes and his interests and the rest of the Missouri complex becomes a blur he can disdain.

But it is difficult at first and, socially, the freshman often needs help. The mixer is Missouri's most elementary means of seeing that he gets it.

The first mixer is generally scheduled as quickly as possible, usually after the opening week of school. Either side can arrange it; one of the girls' social chairmen will call up one of the boys' chairmen, if the boys don't get in touch first.

The location is usually a residence hall lounge or cafeteria, the time normally an afternoon and the dress, informal. Freshman boys who are looking for someone to like are brought together with freshman girls in the same situation. Cokes and a combo serve as a catalyst.

Some of the mixers are solely for freshmen and other new students. A few are open to the entire living group and upperclassmen also attend, to look over the new crop.

The ice thaws slowly. The boys stand off and crack

## 'Getting to know you...' continued

jokes while they wonder, "Which one?" and "Will she go for me?" The girls squirm, wish the boys would stop looking and do something and then each worries that she will be the only girl the boys won't talk to once they do stop standing and looking. Many wish they hadn't come.

A few girls do never get talked to and for them mixers are cruel. But the rest are gradually drawn into light, trivial, but delightful conversation. Then the combo grinds into action and two recent strangers become old friends by sharing a torrid twist.

For some, the mixer leads to future dates, sometimes even a pinning. Others are satisfied with the good time of the moment and a few never do find a reason to be glad they came.

But most important, these students, new to a University which seems so big and so very full of events and activities, have just had the first activity of their own.

Things get better after that.

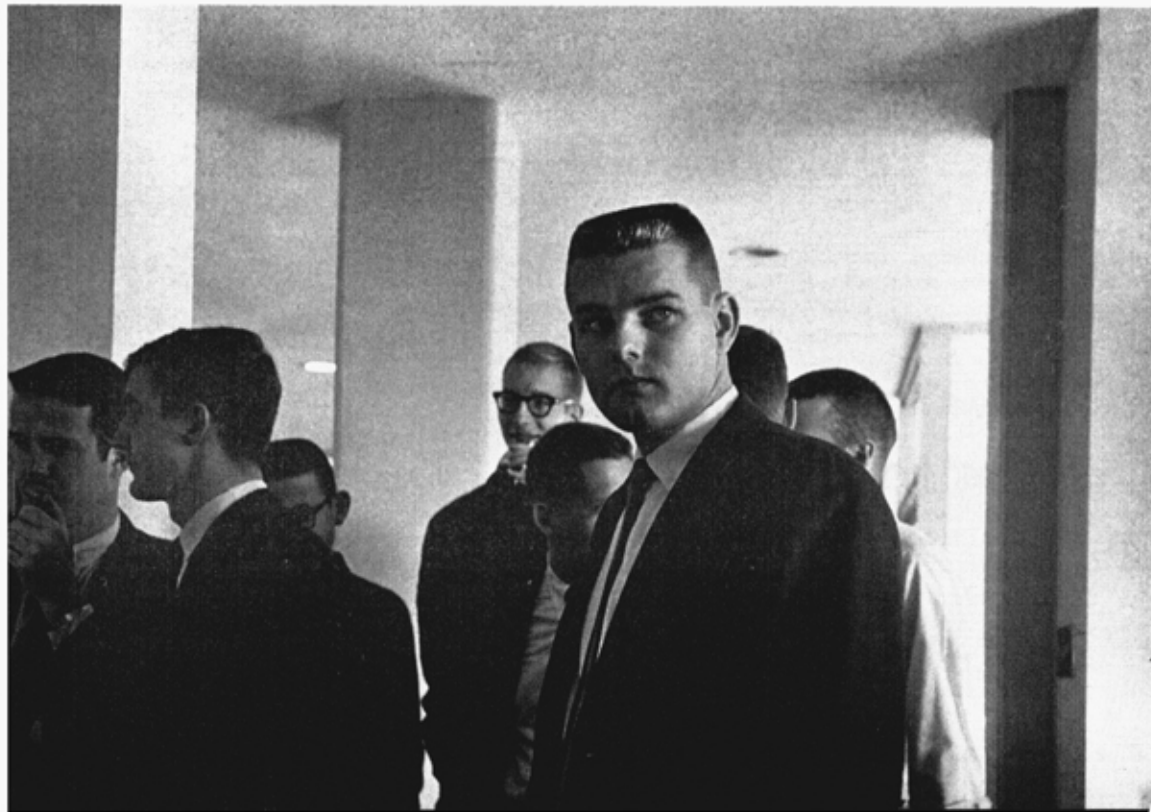
Just about every residence hall group gets involved in at least one mixer. Some houses let it go at that; others, more active, schedule one for almost every weekend. But as the year progresses the purpose and need for the mixer diminish. The freshmen become able to support themselves socially and they turn against the mixer in favor of house parties and outings. By November the mixer is dead, and ungrieved, until the following September.

Photos by George W. Gardner



*Some animation here. This friendly fellow finds interested listeners, but his colleagues in the background still play it cool.*

*Safety in numbers. As these boys group themselves protectively they appear either nonchalant or casually curious.*





*Another adventurous young man moves in bravely, collecting an absorbed threesome and appraising glances. The mixer is beginning to jell.*