

MIZZOU

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Around the Columns

A sweet challenge

Erin Clepper was putting the final touches on the second tier of her Mizzou- and spring-themed cake. Just as she began delicately sliding a support rod into the depths of a layer iced to resemble a basketball net, the tier collapsed. The misstep set Clepper back on her 20-hour journey to completing the project.

Clepper, a radiography student from Tampa, Fla., was one of 55 entrants in the first Mizzou Cake Challenge, a cake-decorating contest sponsored by the MSA/GPC Department of Student Activities March 16, 2011. Contestants could enter into either a professional or amateur category. Food Network celebrity Duff Goldman and three other culinary experts judged both categories.

The colorful cakes featured MU landmarks, Truman the Tiger replicas and even Maxine, the grumpy woman featured in greeting cards — all surrounded by touches of spring. The first-place winner in the amateur category was Nikki Moyer from Excello, Mo., with a towering creation of alternating black and gold and baseball-shaped tiers. In the professional category, the top prize went to Stacey Krieg from St. Charles, Mo., for her academically oriented cake composed of textbooks and miniature graduates near the Columns. An additional People's Choice prize based on text message votes was awarded to Anna Meyer, MA '08, from Columbia for her detailed depiction of Jesse Hall.

Goldman, owner of Charm City Cakes in Baltimore and star of the reality show *Ace of Cakes*, also spoke at Jesse Auditorium about his path to cake-decorating stardom. In the middle of countless laugh-out-loud stories about cake disasters and immature televised antics, he phoned his father, Morris Goldman, BS BA '67. The elder Goldman, who spoke about his time






MU student Erin Clepper places fondant raindrops, clouds and an umbrella on the cake she submitted to the amateur category of the Mizzou Cake Challenge. The cakes had a Mizzou spring theme. Photo by Nicholas Benner

at Mizzou, ended the call with an enthusiastic “M-I-Z” cheer.

Clepper, a relative newcomer to cake decorating, says the Mizzou Cake Challenge was her first competition. Although she didn’t win a prize, Clepper plans to keep baking.

“I think Duff gave some really good advice, such as not being afraid to try something just because you’re afraid of failure,” she says. “Sometimes it’s failure that makes you realize something is not so unattainable in the first place.”

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