

# MIZZOU

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## Around the Columns

### Cornerstone provides design experience

Shawn Browning knew the campus lore of the Columns, but, like most students, she had no idea that another artifact survived the 1892 Academic Hall fire. She hadn't noticed the building's original cornerstone, which in 1915 had been obscurely mounted into Memorial Gate north of Francis Quadrangle. But a new display in Jesse Hall now makes the cornerstone unlikely to be forgotten.

During an Oct. 23, 2010, ceremony, a permanent display housing the cornerstone was unveiled in the Jesse Hall rotunda overlooking the Columns. Campus Facilities employees built the cypress and metal display based on Browning's proposed plans, which won a competition in her architectural design studio course. "The Columns are awesome, but you can't create a display for them," says Browning, a senior architectural studies major from Kirkwood, Mo. "You have to let them speak for themselves. The exciting thing about displaying the cornerstone is that you can wrap information about its history around it."



Senior architectural studies major Shawn Browning of Kirkwood, Mo., won her class's competition to design a display for the cornerstone of Academic Hall. The display was unveiled in Jesse Hall Oct. 23. Photo by Rob Hill.




*[Adobe Flash version 8, or higher, and Java Script are required to view the slide show for this feature story.](#)*

Tom Schultz, BJ '56, MU development director, organized efforts to move the stone to a prominent space and asked Assistant Professor So-Yeon Yoon, MA '98, PhD '04, for her class's design assistance. As part of their curriculum, architectural studies students routinely mock up designs for outside clients. Because of constraints, most of those designs aren't implemented. So when Yoon told her students they'd be competing to design a vessel for the cornerstone, they considered it an honor. For six weeks during the spring 2010 semester, her nine students visited Jesse Hall, took measurements and each drew up two distinct plans. Some thought designing a display case would be simple. But the challenge was creating a structure that would support and protect the 900-pound stone as well as complement Jesse Hall's interior style, including matching its wood stain color.

The selection committee chose Browning and Karen Tobin, senior architectural studies major from St. Louis, as finalists. After multiple revisions, Browning's modern design beat Tobin's traditional one. However, Tobin's idea to tilt the cornerstone was incorporated. While the display is meant to honor MU's founding, for Yoon's students, it's also personal. "Even if their design wasn't chosen," Yoon says, "they'll still remember this project and experience every time they return to campus."

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