

# MIZZOU

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## Alumni Profile

### A family tree of banking

Concerning matters of money, Catherine Allen doesn't beat around the bush.

"I'm a consumer advocate," says Allen of Santa Fe, N.M., chairman and CEO of The Santa Fe Group, the financial services consulting firm she founded in 1996. "I have a passion for encouraging banks to return to helping consumers and small businesses, instead of being so consumed with bonuses and stock prices."

Allen, BS HE '68, LHD '05, advocates that the sector return to the "basics of banking" through re-regulation. Her back-to-basics ideal just happens to be personal. Her father, Robert E. Allen, was president of Perry State Bank in Perry, Mo., from the late 1940s to 1968. "When I was 8 or 9 years old, I would ride into work with him and sit quietly in his meetings," she says. "Six generations of the Allens were in banking or mercantile. So I grew up in a family understanding how public policy and banking came together —



Catherine Allen, BS HE '68, LHD '05, led a personal finance symposium at MU April 22, 2009. Photo by Rob Hill.

it's in my genes.”

Allen's experience in the financial services sector includes positions with companies such as Citicorp, Citibank, Dun and Bradstreet, and CBS Inc. In 1996, she founded BITS, a nonprofit consortium of 100 of the largest U.S. financial institutions, and established The Santa Fe Group. Allen retired as CEO of BITS in 2007.

“I really believe in banking,” she says. “And I grew up thinking bankers were really good people who helped educate others.”

To continue that legacy of education, Allen capitalized on an opportunity through MU's personal financial planning program in the College of Human Environmental Sciences.

While serving as her college's delegate to the For All We Call Mizzou Campaign Steering Committee, she helped develop the Personal Finance Symposium, a forum where business people, representatives of financial institutions, and MU faculty and students discuss the financial sector's issues. The first symposium was held April 22, 2009, at MU's Reynolds Alumni Center and attracted more than 300 attendees. At the symposium, Chancellor Brady Deaton announced that Allen has committed \$1 million of her estate to the college in support of the Office for Financial Success, the textile and apparel management department and the dean's unrestricted fund.

“The banking sector and the public policy sector need responsible, ethical businesspeople,” Allen says. “I consider myself an ethical businessperson. I got that because I grew up in Missouri and went to the University of Missouri.” — *Sarah Garber*

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