

# MIZZOU

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[Home](#) » [Spring 2010](#) » [Alumni Profiles](#) » Putting community in college

## Alumni Profile

### Putting community in college

Luckily for Evelyn Jorgenson, the movers and shakers of Sedalia, Mo., decided to build State Fair Community College when they did in the 1960s. “If not for the community college where I grew up, I might not have gone to college at all,” Jorgenson says. With that associate's degree in hand in 1972, she moved to Columbia where she earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Columbia College in 1976, a master's in higher education from MU in 1987 and a doctorate at MU in 1996. Since then, she has been president of Moberly Area Community College (MACC) and has been doing plenty of moving and shaking of her own.

MACC boasts a fall 2009 enrollment of 4,992 at six central Missouri locations — Columbia, Edina, Hannibal, Kirksville, Mexico and Moberly — and online. Jorgenson and her leadership team decided to branch out from Moberly. “Higher education can seem snobbish,” she says. “It looks at students and says, ‘You can come to me and apply, and we may or may not let you go to school. You’ll have to come to our ivy-covered towers.’ ”

Jorgenson has demolished the ivory towers.

“Community colleges serve a lot of returning students — people who have kids, jobs, mortgages, things that tend to tie you down. In my 13 years, we’ve tried to take college to the people.”



Evelyn Jorgenson, M Ed '87, PhD '96, is president of Moberly Area Community College. Photo by Nicholas Benner

Jorgenson has a special feeling for the students at MACC. “Sometimes people don’t give community college students enough credit. Oftentimes, it’s circumstances in life that cause people to go to community college rather than a four-year college.” For instance, she was the first in her family to go to college and had scarcely even heard of a credit hour by the time she began studies at State Fair.

“With rare exceptions, students can be successful,” Jorgenson says. “But what they need is people around them who believe in them and support them. What we do best is nurture people and try to treat them with respect and awareness of their individual capabilities.” — *Dale Smith*

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