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MIZZOU

This Will Make You Miss Mizzou

Ann Chambers looks back at her time at Mizzou with affection.

Story by Ann Chambers

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I ran across an article from the alumni magazine a while back called “When Tripod Ruled Campus” [January 1980, Page 26]. Nostalgia set in, and I began remembering.

Sure, I remember Tripod, a small, three-legged, shorthaired dog that roamed campus. I came to Mizzou toward the end of his time there.

The place was well-stocked with dogs, mostly fraternity-owned. They attended class and snoozed along with the students, seeming to know which professors were worth listening to and which droned on about nothing.

But Tripod was different. Nobody owned Tripod. He belonged to everybody. Or maybe it was that we all belonged to him. It was his campus.

Nobody ever knew what had happened to his right hind leg. He ran perfectly well on three legs. Just as nobody ever knew where he came from, nobody ever knew what happened to him. He just disappeared one day, never to be seen again. I imagine he just holed up somewhere and died. He had been a campus fixture for at least a dozen years.



Tripod photo by Mary Paxton Keeley, BJ '10, MA '28, was taken during the campus mascot's later years.

I remember other traditions. There were — and still are — the Columns. Six stone columns stand on Francis Quadrangle and are all that remain of the original administration building that burned.

One morning, I rounded the corner of the Geology Building and found a gaping crowd there. During the night, a boy had managed to get on top of one of the Columns. There he sat there in his pajamas. It was a stunt to advertise the campus production of *Pajama Game*. The fire department had to haul him down, and the administration raised a terrific fuss. But he hadn't actually damaged the Column, only the dignity of the administration.

Every incoming freshman heard the tale of the aqueduct. The campus Columns and four more in downtown Columbia supposedly were all that remained of an aqueduct that fizzled. The freshmen believed this story at first, never questioning why an aqueduct would have six columns at one end and four at the other!

I remember our president, Elmer Ellis. He was an exceptional administrator, even from a student's point of view. He was friendly, human and accessible — to a student population well over 11,000 — even back when there was no student government or representation in policymaking. He would always speak to students who passed by. In fact, one time he walked past me on the sidewalk from behind and made a point of turning as he passed to say hello.

College traditions are what mold a spirit among its people and bond them together. They are what make a person look back after decades with affection.

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