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# MIZZOU

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## Jeffersonian Restoration

**Mizzou and the Smithsonian Institution restore  
Jefferson's marble epitaph.**

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**T**he tombstone of Thomas Jefferson, our nation's third president and the author of the Declaration of Independence, has been on MU's campus since 1885. The University of Missouri is the first public university established in the Louisiana Purchase, which Jefferson negotiated with France, doubling America's map in 1803.

Mizzou, with the help of the Smithsonian Institution, refurbished the stone's original marble epitaph and unveiled a more durable facsimile on Francis Quadrangle during MU's week-long 175th anniversary celebration Sept. 15–21, 2014. The damaged original had been in storage since Academic Hall burned in 1892, and the words are now available to be read by future generations of Tigers.

— *Rob Hill and Marcus Wilkins*



After a new marker was placed on Thomas Jefferson's Virginia gravesite in 1883, the president's heirs specified the University of Missouri should receive the original marker. Jefferson's original tombstone, center, was unveiled July 4, 1885, on the front lawn of MU's Academic Hall. Photo courtesy of University Archives, c:0/3/8.



Throughout the decades, the Jefferson tombstone has been in various locations near Francis Quadrangle. It left campus only once, when displayed in 1904 at the St. Louis World's Fair. Publications and Alumni Communication file photo.



To mark the U.S. bicentennial in April 1976, the tombstone was relocated west of the Residence on Francis Quadrangle. Publications and Alumni Communication file photo.



A marble tablet carved with an epitaph written by Jefferson was originally attached to the granite obelisk. Bystanders view the tablet after the tombstone was moved to its present location in 1976. Publications and Alumni Communication file photo.



Damaged in the burning of Academic Hall, the tablet was later placed in a wooden case and stored in the attic of Jesse Hall until 2011. Photo by Rob Hill.



Working in the attic of Jesse Hall, art conservator Marianne Russell Marti prepares the marble tablet from Thomas Jefferson's original grave marker for travel in February 2013 to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., for restoration. Photo by Rachel Coward.



Workers from ARTEX Inc. and Phillip Temple, center, a university worker at Jesse Auditorium, escort the marble tablet to a climate-controlled semitrailer for a trip to the

Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where the artifact was repaired. Photo by Rachel Coward.



The restored marble was on display Sept. 15, 2014, in the lobby of the Missouri Theatre. It will later be displayed in the Jesse Hall lobby. Photo by Rob Hill.



University workers rotate the granite obelisk 180 degrees, facing the plaque surface toward Francis Quadrangle, on May 27, 2014. Photo by Rob Hill.



Robert Marti of Russell-Marti Conservation Services tuck-points a joint in the marble obelisk after it was reoriented. The granite is so coarse that, after Jefferson's death, detailed lettering could not be cut into the surface. Instead, his epitaph was carved into the marble tablet and attached. Photo by Rob Hill.





Once again, Jefferson's tombstone appears as he specified. A weather-resistant replica tablet was attached to the obelisk on Francis Quadrangle. Photo by Rob Hill.

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