John Merrill battles doggedly against unreasoned conformity

By Steve Miller

"Shocking some, ticking others and outraging many . . . " So said Newsweek of Gore Vidal’s highly controversial Myra Breckenridge, and the same might be said of Dr. John Merrill, internationally known scholar and professor of journalism at the University’s Columbia campus.

Many UMC students first encounter Dr. Merrill in “Mass Media and Society,” his undergraduate lecture course. “Most journalists are dull and conformist,” he told us, when I was myself an undergraduate enrolled in the course, “just as most people are dull and conformist. Of course, many people like American journalism, and the way journalism is taught, is all very nice and wonderful. They make me sick, but I know they exist. I experience them every day.”

They make him sick because Dr. Merrill, unlike them but like most of the thinkers who have influenced him, is controversial to the core. He can be called an “enigma” if that term is taken to mean one who rejects hard-like conformity and the bland, “massifying” influences of a society described by H. L. Mencken as one which “injects conformity into the noblest of virtues and the free-functioning personality of itself, along with his intellectual and explications. And if TV, the medium with which today’s students have spent the most time, has drastically increased this conformist tendency, as many believe, then one might expect students today to be unresponsive to Dr. Merrill’s frank, often piercing criticism.

Some dare doubt are unresponsive. In general, however, few journalism students can remain unaffected by the pungency, wit and energy which Dr. Merrill injects into his investigations and explications. And regardless of whether one agrees with his philosophic position and the eloquent, unpretentious style itself, along with his provocative approach to exploring the controversial, can come like “the rigorous wind that breathes the spring” to those whose minds have been long buried in the dross of video display terminals and UPI reperforating machines. (Such mechanics, Dr. Merrill says, are over-emphasized today in journalism education. His concern is with issues—social, cultural, philosophical.)

“A journalist,” Dr. Merrill said in a recent lecture, “should live two things: the language and truth.” In The Imperative of Freedom (Steve Miller is one of Dr. Merrill’s former M.A. students.)

Three personnel changes at system level announced

Three major personnel changes have occurred within the last month at the UM system level:

- Mr. G. H. (Bud) Entzminger has been assigned to serve as the University’s legislative liaison in Jefferson City. Mr. Entzminger, a veteran administrator at UM, will retain his present title and position as vice chancellor for alumni relations and development on the Columbia campus, although some of his duties in that sphere may be redistributed to his office.
- Mrs. Sandra F. Moody, formerly a legislative assistant under Sen. Stuart Symington, has been named to serve as the University’s Washington liaison for government affairs.
- Mrs. Moody’s assignment is made on a trial basis, according to Dr. Olson, and its extension will depend on whether having a special liaison in Washington enhances the University’s relationship with Congress and federal agencies and improves their understanding of the University’s needs and capabilities.

As an assistant to Senator Symington, Mrs. Moody advised him in several areas, including health, education, labor and tax.

She worked on committee and conference reports, assisted with legislation and maintained contacts with members of various congressional staffs.

A native of Springfield, Mo., she is a 1968 graduate of Ballor University, cum laude, with a B.A. in political science, and received an M.A. in political science in 1971 from George Washington University.
- Dr. Merl Baker announced that he is leaving the central administration, having completed his work on compliance procedures, to resume teaching and research. He will teach courses in engineering management at UMT’s St. Louis Graduate Engineering Center, and he has a joint appointment with the Columbia campus to work on a bioengineering project.

Dramatic increases in health care costs have been a problem for years, and the insurance companies are not the only ones responsible. In many cases, the problem has been caused by overly generous benefits and inadequate cost sharing. This has led to astronomical increases in premiums and deductibles, making health care unaffordable for many people. However, recent developments suggest that there may be a way out of this dilemma: by increasing competition among insurance companies and promoting consumer choice, premiums and deductibles could be reduced, allowing more people to afford the coverage they need. Prof. John C. Merrill

[This book his most controversial. It came into being as an outgrowth from his thesis for his recently earned master’s degree in philosophy in 1968. Merrill’s other chief academic interests are the free press and international communication in general. Last summer he was one of 10 American delegates to the First Philippine-American Communication Conference, in the Philippines, where he presented a paper on the philosophical parallels between General Semantics and Buddhism. From there Dr. Merrill’s summer lecture-seminar tour took him to South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia. In the last decade, under sponsorship by the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency, Dr. Merrill has lectured in about 30 countries. Included was a visit to South Vietnam, to hold that country’s first and last seminar in journalism.

Over the years, Dr. Merrill says, he has grown more liberal with regard to journalism and has shed the traditional notions of what journalism “should” be as he has discovered the diverse challenges posed by journalism for the “Apollonian” (continued on page 2)
John Merrill agitates for thought, rocking boats that need rocking

(continued from page 11)

mind. Dr. Merrill's intellectual currents have carried him farther and farther from America's mainstream journalists, many of whom, he says, suffer little from robots. "In general," he says, "I've found foreign journalists more articulate and more humanistically oriented. Here the concern is more with mechanics, more with techniques instead of with issues and theories. The result is a piecemeal mess. Few journalists in America are guided by any philosophical or overriding theories. It never occurs to them to think in such terms. They don't like to talk about it; about their new editing machines or their new piped-in music. This swirling tide is far from easy. Little encouragement is to be found. Dr. Merrill says, from the general run of today's university students. Though a few rare birds still exist in the growing flock of conformist geese, there is in general "an abnormal ignorance, a widespread illiteracy.

legislation at a glance

State legislators are considering a number of bills which, if approved, would in some way affect university affairs. A brief survey and status report as of Jan. 7:

- SB15 (Wiggins)—Provides a student member to the Board of Curators.
- SB47 (Frappier)—Permits the University from conveying land within a campus or any University land of more than 500 contiguous acres without approval by the General Council.
- SB76 (Trinni)—Requires a person to have a B.S. degree in agriculture from a land-grant university before obtaining a certificate to teach vocational agriculture.
- SB144 (Bliss)—Prevents a teacher from obtaining a life teaching certificate after having completed a course of two or more semester hours in the psychology and education of the exceptional child. (Present law provides that a person cannot receive even a teacher's certificate without completing such a course.)
- SB152 (Ryan)—Repeals section of law requiring a person to complete a course in psychology and education of the exceptional child before receiving a teaching certificate. No new section would be enacted.
- SB605 (Downing)—Defines "death" for legal purposes as that time when there has been an irreversible cessation of total brain functions, in line with normal medical practices.
- HB114 (Halley)—Authorizes those over 65 to attend Missouri colleges or universities without charge at a reduced charge if classroom space is available and no additional personnel would have to be hired.
- HB115 (Halley)—Removes ceiling of 25 full-time employees now placed on the Coordinating Board for Higher Education.
- HB144 (McAuleny)—Authorizes public employees to organize and bargain collectively. All public employees would be covered under arbitration. Strikes not prohibited, although nothing in the law specifically deals with them as such. The law sets out in the act for resolving impasses would first have to be exhausted.
- HB188 (Nilges)—Requires state division of design and construction to perform certain advisory and inspection services for all state agencies.
- HB284 (Russell-6th Dist.)—Prohibits start of construction of a major project without obtaining a certificate of site accessibility and public need from the Department of Natural Resources.

They don't rest on their own accomplishments, but expect to be entertained.

Yet Dr. Merrill is reluctant to give up the struggle, preferring to continue to agitate for change. "I'm not satisfied, surely can't be satisfied," he answers that question in The Imperative of Freedom: "It is encouraging that some students, as well as some professors—brave souls—to manage to keep the system alive and to keep their university and autonomy, and to add to the educational treatise in spite of its continuing and deepening stresses. But these are the exceptions, others who are the pride of their own individual minds; there are the ones who have self-esteem and confidence that they can transcend the conflicting influences of formal education and professionalization and inject into society their own sense of personality and authenticity. They are the committed ones, those who are certain that with national and spiritual thought and action, they can succeed in institutionalized education and journalism without sacrificing themselves. These are the ones who form the "saving remnant" of libertarian journalism; it is they who will man the bulwarks in the fight against the conformism and conventionalism and conformity, which are creeping in from all sides.

So a determined if dwindling circle of years remains to cheer Dr. Merrill on. But he is a born boat-rocker who, in the end, needs nothing but his personal integrity to spur him on, thus embodying Meilen's ideal of the "free artist": an adventurer on the chaotic highways of the world, the gulliver of his time but enemy of his heart." Thus Dr. Merrill continues to stand tall in an environment geared to the survival of the dullest—people who "shudder to gears, to cogs in machines, to anything but humane, intellectually alive people. Ultimately, then, Dr. Merrill is motivated not by applause—though he has received standing ovations for his marathon speeches or his innate willingness to eloquently defined by Emerson: "Your voice is for conformity. There is alive somewhere a man whose honesty reaches to the bottom of the earth and on whom the day when you meet him, you sink into the class of counterfeits.

Pogue in charge at UMR; search committee set up

Dr. Jim C. Pogue has assumed the responsibility of interim chancellor of UMR following the departure of Dr. Raymond Bisplinghoff, who resigned to become vice president for research at Tyco Laboratories, Inc., Boston.

In announcing Dr. Pogue's appointment, UM Interim President James G. Olson said he has been charged with the responsibility of "moving ahead vigorously" in the administration of the campus.

Dr. Pogue has been a professor of English at UMR since 1964 and provost and dean of faculties since 1974. He earlier served as head of UMR's humanities department and director of the division of liberal arts.

He received his Ph.D. in English from UCM in 1960. He was an instructor in English at UMC from 1958 to 1983, and then taught one year at Wayne State College in Nebraska before joining the Rolla faculty.

A nine-member search committee representing faculty, administration, staff and alumni has been created by Dr. Olson to screen and nominate candidates for the chancellor of UMR.

Dr. James H. Tracey, professor of electronic engineering at Rolla, is head of the committee. Its members are Dr. Donald L. Warner, professor of geological engineering;
Scientist pursues elusive goal of long-range climatic forecast

By Jyoti Dutta

University Information Office

It was not a crystal ball Dr. Ernest Kung was looking at. If it were he could tell whether there will be winds abundant or winds ahead. With the technology available, he would not be able to tell totally exactly when they would originate or move, that is not yet within his or anyone else's capability.

It is an accurate wide-range weather forecast for a two-week period is within the grasp, he remarks, but long-range climatic forecasting as seasonal forecasting still is a thing of the future.

Yet we still do not really understand the processes that govern the weather, which at least we know is one of the most complex physical systems, Dr. Kung explains. "We realize our dependence on the weather in a varying degree, but as standards of living increase we may lose sight of how basically we are still dependent on the processes of nature as they constantly manifest themselves as weather around us.

And because worldwide observations are required to understand the processes that make up the daily weather and how the weather in turn defines the climatic zones around the earth."

"Although this has been known for a long time," he says, "it is only within the last few decades that we have really understood how closely weather and climate at a given place are influenced by processes that develop far away.

That is not yet within his or anyone else's capability."

In the winter of 1975 the huge Atlantic Tropical Experiment was undertaken. Some 25 nations participated in the project which involved a fleet of 40 or more, numerous aircraft and satellites. The data from that experiment now is in our hands, Dr. Kung says. "We are in the process of analyzing that data to fit into our model." These have been other international experiments of comparable magnitude. The

Air Mass Transformation Experiment was conducted for two winters in 1974-75 to study head-duct from sections over Japan and the China Sea.

GARP scientists are planning dense-coverage research in the Indian Ocean to observe in detail the agriculturally important monsoons. In a couple of years there will be another similar experiment.

"Over the years we have accumulated substantial knowledge, and we are transforming this knowledge into numerical models with the hope that these models will explain the physical processes involved in the transformation of energy," Dr. Kung explains.

Agricultural, industrial activities and national policy making are becoming more and more dependent on long-range weather forecasting, Dr. Kung says. "Society is becoming more and more weather-sensitive. Yet there is not much general recognition of how much benefit we can get from accurate long-term weather forecasting."

While long-range climatic forecasting is still a thing of the future, it has been some progress. "There was a time," Dr. Kung says, "when we could only say (climate) occurred. Now we can say it is occurring. And, I hope, it may not be long when we will be able to say it will occur."

"And, we think we are moving toward the right direction here at UMC," he concludes. "It's rare for a research project to continue for 10 years on substantial NSF funding. This apparently shows we are doing a good job."

Twelve named to serve on presidential committee

The creation of a 12-member selection committee to screen nominations for the presidency of the University was announced last week by Mr. Van Williams, president of the Board of Curators.

Nominations from the four campus search committees will be turned over to the screening committee, which will obtain additional information on the nominees and submit by March 1 a list of five to eight candidates to a presidential selection committee yet to be named. The screening committee will interview nominees and recommend not fewer than four candidates to the board by June 1. Mr. Williams said the board would appoint a new president by Sept.

Members of the screening committee are: Robert S. Daniel, professor of psychology, and Charles O. Lodge, dean, School of Medicine, UMC.

- W. Gilbert Block, professor of education, and J. Joseph D. O'Leary, dean, School of Education, UMC.

- James W. Johnson, professor of chemical engineering, and Theodore J. Flanigan, dean, School of Mines, UMC.

- Charles T. Dougherty, professor of English, and Robert S. Bader, dean, College of Arts and Sciences, UMSL.

- Lynn G. Shaughnessy, a UMC junior majoring in journalism, and formerly a student at UMSL, representing students of the four campuses.

- Dale R. Spencer, UMC professor of journalism, representing the intercampus Faculty Council.

- A. G. Unkrich, UMC vice president for administration, representing the central administration.

- A nonacademic representative to be announced later.

The committee is expected to convene this month after classes resume.

Banning appointment

UMC's vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. James H. Banning, has been named to the 12-member Executive Committee of the Council for Student Affairs of the National Association of State University and Land-Grant Colleges.

Research post

Dr. J. Musacchia, associate dean of UMC's Graduate School, has accepted a continuing appointment as associate director of the National Science Foundation's Reserve Research Center, of which he has been interim director from March 1974 until September 1975.

Dr. Musacchia has gained worldwide recognition for his expertise in the nature of hypothermia—the lowering of body temperature associated with hibernation. He has demonstrated that hypothermia induced with helium and cold exposure has applications in medicine.

Right to write

Letters, posters and publications relating to freedom of expression are included in a P.E.N. exhibit at UMC's Ellis Library. The exhibit will remain at Ellis through Jan. 30.

'Trailblazer' retires

Dr. Hazel Williams, who was the first full-time black professor at UMC, has retired after more than 40 years of teaching and counseling. She joined the UMKC faculty in 1963 as an associate professor and became a full professor of secondary education in 1963.

Dr. Williams has been an inspiration to many black educators and she plans to continue mentoring the young. "My real point of interest," she explained recently, "is that during the time blacks were seeking integration, the black teacher was not alone and was labeled 'not well trained'. However, many black educators were such outstanding individuals that it was an honor to be instructed by them. I want to point out that the blacks have done a number of things of which people are not aware.
Concrete conference

UMC’s 24th Missouri Concrete Conference has been scheduled for Mar. 14. Among the topics to be covered are material inspection and approval, in-place concrete testing, special concrete mixes, and in-place concrete strength evaluation, the role of the Portland Cement Association in Missouri, improved concrete quality and durability with wire beads, rapid determination of cement and water content for concrete, accelerated strength testing, and energy-saving concrete design construction.

Information about the conference may be obtained from Ronn K Kratz, Extension Division, UMR, Rolla, Mo. 65401 (ph. 314-534-4201).

Jones elected

Dr. Philip M. Jones, UMC, professor emeritus of pathology, has been elected vice president of the Federation of Protestant Orthodontic Organizations.

Fellow in society

Dr. Arthur G. Matches, research agronomist with the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service and professor of agronomy at UMC, has been elected a fellow in the American Society of Agronomy.

The honor, which has been bestowed on only 22 of the society’s 5,000 members, is based on professional achievement and meritorious service. Dr. Matches was recognized for his research on pasture systems, forage management and pasture-animals techniques. He has developed forage-pasture systems for year-round grazing and has identified key factors in the selection of plants for breeding improved forages.

Fellowship

Dr. Martin L. Faust, professor emeritus of political science at UMC, has established a fellowship in the Institute of Public Administration at UMC with a gift of $1,200.

Dr. Faust retired in 1967 after 38 years on the faculty. A distinguished teacher in public administration, he was established two years ago in his name.

Honor for Bell

Dr. Robert J. Bell, UMC, professor of physics, has been elected a fellow in the American Physical Society.

Of the 30,000 members of the society’s 50,000 members, only 24 have been so honored. According to Dr. Laird Schaefer, head of UMC’s physics department, the honor was bestowed on Dr. Bell, who has contributed in a special way to the advancement of his independent research.

Dr. Bell, who has been on the UMC faculty since 1965, is also senior investigator for the Graduate Center for Materials Research.

Olson pressing campaign to win budget approval

Dr. Olson, UMC’s interim president, has carried the University’s budget appeal to the coordinating board. Olson is one of the state’s 50 senators and the Senate Appropriations Committee as part of the administration’s efforts to win approval of UMC’s $147.8-million request for state funds in operations in 1978-79.

The University’s total state request is $20.1 million more than its current appropriation. Dr. Olson has said at hearings that most of the increase, $18.2 million, would be used for an 11 per cent boost in salaries and wages base. He said the annual state appropriation is the University’s “largest and most critical source of funds,” constituting about half of the system’s total education and general operating budget.

In November the Coordinating Board for Higher Education recommended that UM receive $136 million, an increase of $.3 million, plus a “deficiency adjustment” of $3.0 million if state funds are available. Governor Teasdale used the CBEG figure as a guideline at the governor’s budget appeals hearing Dec. 20, but he has as yet made no recommendation.

Dr. Olson said he was convinced that Missouri would want their state university to compare favorably with top universities elsewhere. He believes that if the state budget is large enough, a dream is to regain some of the loss we have experienced,” he said.

The University is also seeking an 8 per cent increase in its equipment and expenditures, as well as funds to strengthen research efforts in economics and energy production.

Vacancies

The following administrative, professional, and academic vacancies were filled with Spectrum as of Jan. 6:

UCM: Asst. radiation safety officer; chemistry; construction engineer; employee relations director; fiscal analyst; info. specialist; police captain; production coordinator; prog. adviser; prog. coordinator; research specialist (2); sr. methods & procedure analyst; sr. research chemist; sr. research scientist; sr. systems analyst; supervisory data processing; systems analyst.

University Extension: Instructor; coordinator; Conferences & Short Courses; prof. of horticulture; prof. of agronomy; prof. of agriculture; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration; prof. of economics; prof. of business administration.

Medical Computer Center: head nurse (3); prof. of radiology; prof. of radiation therapy; prof. of medicine; prof. of surgery; prof. of neurology; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of pathology; prof. of epidemiology; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health; prof. of environmental health; prof. of occupational health; prof. of family medicine; prof. of internal medicine; prof. of pediatrics; prof. of public health.