James Devine, 1948-2010

Friday, May 14, 2010


Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Saturday, May 15, at Memorial Funeral Home, 1217 Business Loop 70 W. Private family memorial services will be held at a later date.

Jim was born on Jan. 31, 1948, in Newark, N.J. He was married to Sharon Jungquist on May 25, 1971, in Chambersburg, Pa., and she survives.

Jim graduated from Red Bank High School in 1966, where he was class president, earned his Bachelor of Arts from Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa., and earned his juris doctorate from Seton Hall University in 1975, where he was on law review and named to the Order of the Coif. Jim clerked for the Honorable Patrick J. McGann and the Honorable John P. Arnone, Superior Court of New Jersey. He practiced law from 1976 to 1980 at Madden & Holobinko in Middletown, N.J. In 1980 he joined the faculty at the University of Missouri School of Law, where he served as professor and associate dean. Jim became well-known in the legal community for his scholarly work in trial practice, professional responsibility, sports law and civil procedure. He has authored numerous publications regarding his professional interests.
Jim served with Missouri Valley Swimming since 1990 in various capacities. He served on the national board of review for USA Swimming and counselors committee. He ultimately received the Lifetime Membership Award from USA Swimming and the ConocoPhillips Service Award.

Jim loved the ocean, Bruce Springsteen, baseball, swimming, his dogs, the students he served for 30 years and, most of all, his family.

He is also survived by three sons, Zach Devine and his wife, Rachael, of Lawrence, Kan., Josh Devine and his wife, Christina, of Clayton, and Noah Devine of St. Louis; and his mother, Lucy Devine of Daytona Beach, Fla.

He was preceded in death by his father, Richard Devine.

Memorial contributions can be made to University of Missouri Law School Foundation, Columbia Second Chance and Columbia Swim Club, c/o Memorial Funeral Home, 1217 Business Loop 70 W., Columbia, Mo., 65202.
UM pay raises in future?

Hopefully next year, Forsee says.

By Janese Heavin

Saturday, May 15, 2010

Increasing employee salaries a year from now is University of Missouri System President Gary Forsee’s top priority, he told members of MU’s Staff Council.

Until then, they’ll have to make due with verbal recognition and recognize that things could be worse.

“In tough times, basic recognition — maybe that’s all we have,” Forsee told the group, adding that UM is better off than peers around the country.

Forsee and Chancellor Brady Deaton stopped by the regular Staff Council meeting Thursday afternoon, a week before Staff Recognition Week. Staff Council is composed of 16 employees who represent administrative, technical, clerical and maintenance staff.

For the second year in a row, university staff members can expect flat salaries this coming fiscal year. Most faculty members also won’t see their paychecks increase; however, a few will receive compensation for promotions such as advancing to associate or full professors.

Although Forsee said he understands morale is low as employees face a second year without pay increases, he said administrators are going to do “everything I know to be humanly possible” to boost salaries next year. But he acknowledged: “I don’t have an answer to where that’s going to come from.”

The university relies, in part, on state funding, and the state’s fiscal 2011 budget is plugged with federal stimulus dollars that are expected to run out the following year. That’s why UM has to find other ways to support its mission, Forsee said.

It might require tradeoffs, he warned. “If we think this is a top priority, than what other things may have to fall to the wayside?”

One possible solution Forsee is pitching is the idea of shared services. Earlier this year, he created a team to look at ways the four-campus system can consolidate functions to be more efficient.
Forsee said he understands the idea of consolation conjures up negative images of outsourcing, but he assured the group that massive staff cuts aren’t the goal.

“It’s simply a smart way of doing business,” he said.

Staff members asked Forsee to consider providing employee training opportunities so anyone who might get consolidated out of a job could seek other university employment.

Jackie Jones, vice chancellor for administrative services, told employees to think of the situation as a journey and to recall how much their jobs have already changed over the years with technological advances.

“Staff Council has always been a group of people who say, ‘What can we do?’ ” she said. “It hasn’t been sitting back and complaining. … We’re all nervous right now. It’s scary, but things are changing all the time.”

At least one employee shared the sentiment.

“We understand,” said David Walsh, who works at Ellis Library. Employees are frustrated and “not making as much money as we’d like,” but understand it’s temporary. “We’re not doing bad. We’re in pretty good shape.”

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
I come to this post biased. I hate Sprint. It is to the cell phone industry what Ryan Seacrest is to MENSA.

A non-factor.

I live in the city (Overland Park, Kan.) of Sprint's world headquarters, the embattled cell service provider. OK, so that’s not the official description of business but who cares? Sprint doesn't know exactly what it does, why should I?

You might have noticed the company's slick commercials currently airing. They're meant to be the televised equivalent of Muzak in a doctor's office, to calm everyone's nerves. Sprint, you see, is in the dumper. Its stock has tanked. It has laid off thousands in my town (greater Kansas City), ripping the economic and emotional soul out of a large part of the metro area.

Yeah, I hate Sprint. Annoyance turned into genuine dislike a few years ago when I realized I was getting better cell service out of town than in Kansas City -- home of the world headquarters!

Goodbye Sprint, hello T-Mobile.

Sprint is a badly run business with bad customer service. Yet it keeps trying to swim upstream in an industry that continues to pass it by. It is a salmon in its final death throes. The difference being Sprint has no eggs to lay. If perception is reality than Sprint is barren.

All this is meant to introduce you to Gary Forsee, the University of Missouri's current system president. If you're familiar with the Missouri-to-the-Big-Ten chatter, then you should also realize that Forsee could buy the Big Ten. That's what working for Sprint does for you.
You see, Forsee has done a lot of falling upward lately. In 2007, left as Sprint's CEO and took over as Missouri president in early 2008. That's the nice way to put it. Here's how the Kansas City Star described his departure.

_Under mounting pressure from disgruntled investors and Sprint's board of directors, Forsee resigned as the company's chairman and CEO in October [2007]... Sprint shares have dropped by nearly 65 percent._

If things don't go well in the future for Missouri, you have been warned. Sprint's board of directors apparently was so grateful for Forsee's resignation that it awarded him a $40 million severance package. Part of that deal includes $84,325 a month for the rest of his life.

Really.

Whether the University of Missouri goes bankrupt or the football team wins the Rose Bowl, the school's president gets $1 million a year just for sitting around. That doesn't count his $400,000 salary from Missouri (before a possible $100,000 in incentives per year). If you have been outraged by overcompensated CEOs, this is the time to officially throw up in your mouth a little.

All this would be somewhat digestible if Forsee had a smidge of an educational background. The man has spent 35 years in telecommunications. He has a bachelor's degree from Missouri-Rolla. The school awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2005, apparently because of his success at Sprint.

Other than that, someone please help me figure out how the CEO of a university doesn't have much of an educational background. Ah, but he does have a lot of money and no matter what happens with Missouri at least one guy is going to have hit the jackpot.

All this is doubly important because Forsee was among those Missouri officials who met with the Kansas City Sports Commission on Thursday. The meeting was set up to feel out Missouri on its future intentions. Its departure from the Big 12 would undercut the commission's ability to bid on the Big 12 basketball tournament and Big 12 football championship going forward. Kansas City is essentially the center of the Big 12. It is within easy driving distance of almost half of the league's teams. It has hosted several conference championship events in the Big 12's 14-year history.

Maybe the commission needed to ask more pointed questions. Maybe it's not so much about how long Missouri is going to be with the Big 12, given his track record, how long is Forsee going to be around Missouri? And in what shape is he going to leave it?
Grad’s journey a sight to see

Student returns to MU to finish degree.

Photo by Don Shrubshell | Buy this photo

Gretchen Maune of Columbia sits with her guide dog Keeper yesterday during her graduation ceremony at the Hearnes Center. Maune lost her eyesight about three years ago and quit college. She later returned to MU.

By Janese Heavin

Sunday, May 16, 2010

Gretchen Maune came to the University of Missouri in 2001 as a typical college freshman who thought she’d figured out who she was and where she was headed in life.
Yesterday, she received her bachelor’s degree with a guide dog at her side and a newfound perspective on life.

About three years ago, Maune lost her eyesight to a rare degenerative disease in the middle of pursuing an English degree at MU. Depressed and uncertain about her future, Maune quit college but decided to remain in Columbia. It paid off; She returned to Mizzou later and finished her coursework.

“My mom wanted me to come home” to Blue Springs, Maune said before to MU’s College of Arts and Sciences commencement yesterday. “I knew if I moved home, I would stay there.”

Celebrating her daughter’s graduation at Billiards on Broadway after the afternoon ceremony, Robin Maune admitted she wanted her near after learning of the disease.

“I was frightened for her,” Robin Maune said. “I wanted her to be safe. Once the shock wore off, I was like, ‘Yes!’ I’m so proud of her. I’m honored to be her mother.”

Returning to the MU campus wasn’t without challenges, though. It took longer for special textbooks to arrive, Maune said.

Ellis Library did not have books she needed in either Braille or audio formats. And she said the student recreation center was impossible for her to navigate.

“A few years earlier, as a sighted student, everything on campus was available to me,” she said. “As a blind student, I pay the same, but not everything is available to me. ... It’s supposed to be integrated, but I don’t have the same stuff. I really want it to change.”

Maune is prepared to be that change. She’s enrolling in the Truman School of Public Affairs next year to pursue a master’s in public affairs in hopes of becoming a lobbyist for disability rights. Her blindness might have taken a toll on her attitude in the beginning, but Maune has exchanged negativity for a sense of humor.

“I can do anything,” she said. “Well, maybe I shouldn’t drive a taxi or fly a plane, but I can do a lot of other things.”

Other highlights from Mizzou’s weekend commencement activities:

The first class to graduate with MU’s new physical therapy doctorate celebrated commencement yesterday. A total of 40 students completed the program, which is a more rigorous version of the previous master’s in physical therapy program, spokeswoman Cheri Ghan said.

At the Honors Ceremony yesterday morning in Mizzou Arena, two alumni received honorary degrees: Leon Russell, who received his bachelor’s degree and doctorate of veterinary medicine and is president of the World Veterinary Association; and Eugenie Scott, who received her doctorate in anthropology and is executive director of the National Center for Science Education.
Graduates are finding jobs hard to come by

By Janese Heavin

Sunday, May 16, 2010

Ideally, Emily Truesdell would use the bachelor’s degree in communication she earned from the University of Missouri yesterday to land a job in public relations or event planning. Realistically, there aren’t a lot of open positions, said Truesdell, who said she’s been actively searching for a job in her field. “It’s depressing,” she said.

So to boost her résumé and perhaps buy a little time, Truesdell is considering enrolling in a nursing program. That way, she said, she’ll have an advantage to snag any future public relations positions in the medical field.

Roughly 5,500 students graduated from MU this weekend, but that doesn’t mean they’re all headed straight to the proverbial “real world.” Instead, many plan to continue their studies, and in some cases students are looking to couple their college education with other trades in hopes of making themselves more marketable in an economy where traditional career paths are becoming less common.

There were several examples at MU’s College of Arts and Sciences yesterday, where some 800 students graduated at the Hearnes Center. The Tribune randomly surveyed graduates, none of whom had jobs waiting for them.

Chris Merrill is heading to a firefighter’s academy in September to pursue his career goal. He earned a degree in interdisciplinary studies from Mizzou, not because it’s needed in the field, but instead to give him an edge come promotion time someday.

“A college degree makes it easier to move up,” he said, adding that he’d like to eventually become chief of a fire department.

Alice Lindley will take her general studies degree to a nursing program. Josh Ray and Harrison Smith, graduates who were enrolled in ROTC, are headed to National Guard training.

Ashley Hawse wants to use her communications degree to work in the not-for-profit realm, but for now will have to move back home with her parents until she can land a gig.

More than 27 percent of graduates across the country are considering professional or graduate school instead of the workplace this year, up from 25.6 percent last year, according to a recent study from the National Association of Colleges and Employers.
Also up is the percentage of graduates who have jobs waiting for them. The NACE found that 24.4 percent of 2010 graduates who applied for jobs actually got one compared to 19.7 percent of last year’s graduates.

That’s mainly because they’re not as picky as last year’s class: NACE found that more students accepted jobs they were offered, while 2009 graduates tended to hold out for better positions.

MU tracks the status of post-graduates through surveys, and the latest data comes from those who graduated in the winter of 2008 or in the spring or summer of 2009.

Of the 61 percent of students who responded to MU’s questionnaire, 73 percent were employed compared to 75 percent of those graduating the previous school year.

Although some programs, such as health professions and nursing, saw all responding graduates working jobs related to their degrees, the College of Arts and Sciences had the smallest number, 63 percent, of graduates working in fields related to their degrees.

Despite an uncertain future, though, Mizzou graduates said they were happy to be done with coursework.

“Last night it hit me,” Merrill said. “I don’t have any more school or classes. Hopefully, now I’ll get a job and wait until the academy starts.”

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
Grads near and far gather online

MU site includes photos, speeches.

By Janese Heavin
Friday, May 14, 2010

Kristen Duncan was prepared to head to graduate school after receiving two bachelor's degrees in August 2001, but the terrorist attacks a month later prompted her to enlist in the Air Force instead.

Kristen Duncan

Through the University of Missouri's online learning program, Duncan was able to continue her studies while serving her country. This week, she graduates with a master's degree in journalism through MU Direct Continuing and Distance Education.

Duncan, who returned from a deployment in Afghanistan last month, is stationed in Florida and can't make it to campus for a formal commencement ceremony. Instead, she and some 250 others earning online degrees from MU are celebrating virtually.

MU's Online Commencement is a website that provides a list of graduates, videotaped remarks from administrators, a photo gallery and a guestbook where friends and family can leave congratulatory messages. The virtual graduation, in its third year, is one of only a few of its kind in the country, spokeswoman Dolores Shearon said.

The program also allows graduates to send friends and family members text invitations.
“We’re trying to simulate the real on-campus graduation experience as much as you can do in an online setting,” she said.

Duncan plans to participate by posting photographs and listening to the prerecorded messages.

“I loved being a student, so just to be able to feel like I get to virtually walk across the stage makes me feel a bit of satisfaction,” she said.

Duncan enrolled in MU’s online program in 2006 because she said it was the only program that allowed her to focus on strategic communications. As a former public affairs officer for the Air Force, “it was a perfect fit for me,” she said.

Studying while deployed — first in Iraq and this past year in Afghanistan — was tough, she said. Time constraints allowed her to only take one or two courses a semester.

Duncan was still in Afghanistan when she was slated to defend her thesis. She had hoped to come to campus a week earlier, but political tensions kept her from leaving the country. Then, when she was able to leave, the volcanic ash out of Iceland delayed a flight from Kuwait.

Somehow, she said, “the stars aligned, and I was still able to be on the ground” in Florida “to defend my thesis through Skype.”

Armed with a master’s degree, Duncan said she’s scheduled to be deployed again next year but is in line for a job at the Pentagon after that.

“I’m hoping what I’ve learned will contribute to telling the Air Force story,” she said.

Duncan isn’t the only graduate who studied at MU from a foreign location. One graduate this year is from Shanghai, China, and another is from Bermuda. Virtual graduates also hail from across the country.

In his online remarks, Provost Brian Foster praised the students for receiving degrees in a nontraditional way.

“You didn’t let the barriers of time or distance keep you from achieving your goal. You found a way to make your education a reality,” he said. “This speaks well for your future. Successful people find solutions, even when faced with difficult odds.”

CAMPUS CEREMONIES

The University of Missouri and Stephens College have graduation ceremonies scheduled throughout the weekend. For times and locations for specific events, go to www.missouri.edu or www.stephens.edu. MU events planned at outdoor sites have rain locations listed for each event.

MU’s Online Commencement can be found at mudirect.missouri.edu.
MU recognizes honors students, School of Medicine graduates on Saturday

By Nicole Lebsack
May 15, 2010 | 4:24 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – Gray skies and a constant drizzle Saturday meant MU’s honors convocation was held in the Mizzou Arena instead of outside at Francis Quadrangle, but even the dreary weather couldn’t diminish the excitement of graduates and their families.

Students and faculty began trickling into the arena bright and early Saturday morning, and by 8:15 a.m., the trickle turned into a steady stream of excited graduates. Students milled around the building, some waiting for friends and others pausing for a few minutes of serenity before entering the chaos.

Brian Swift, who graduated with a degree in engineering and will move to Seattle to study for a doctoral degree at the University of Washington, took a moment to straighten his regalia before joining his classmates. His orange cords symbolized honors research in engineering, and he wore a green stole to represent his active support of the Society of Women Engineers.

MU employee and self-described non-traditional student Patty Luckenotte wore a beaming smile as she waited to receive recognition for her general studies degree, an accomplishment 18 years in the making.

Offering a pop of color in the sea of black gowns, journalism graduate Marina Shifrin caught the attention of her fellow graduates with her bright green sneakers and sunglasses.

“I wanted to look nice, but also spice it up a little,” she said.
Ryan Olson, a finance and banking graduate who will enter University of Missouri Kansas City's law school this fall, waited for a crowd of his Delta Upsilon fraternity brothers.

“It's surprising for some people because a fraternity is a social thing, but here a bunch of us are at the honors graduation,” he said.

Before their medallions were presented, two honorary doctoral degree recipients acted as keynote speakers for the 1,192 students.

Leon Russell, president of the World Veterinary Association, advised students to give credit to others when good things happen and to take the blame for the bad.

Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education, said she turned to her Facebook friends for inspiration when writing her speech. Among their suggestions: wear sunscreen (alluding to a column by Chicago Tribune writer Mary Schmich) and trust your brain.

But while she stressed the necessity of asking questions and using reason, she also emphasized the importance of using one’s heart when making tough decisions.

At 2:30 p.m. in Jesse Hall, the 2010 class of the MU School of Medicine gathered for their commencement ceremony.

They selected two students to address the crowd, and new graduate Ted Thomas welcomed students, families and friends.

“When I found out I was going to be giving this speech, I turned to my best two sources of information: Google and my mother,” he said.

His mother suggested finding a good quote, Thomas said, and Google did the rest.

He chose Sir Winston Churchill’s quote, “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give,” to represent the class, and he asked his classmates to remember everything they gave each other over the years.

Graduate Matt Johnson was chosen as the class speaker, and his advice drew from personal experience working in the hospital. He told of a woman dying of breast cancer
who, when asked what the hardest part of her situation was, said it was losing her hair. His surprise at the answer taught him a lesson, he said, and he urged his fellow graduates to remember to ask questions and listen to the answers.

Alexander Garza, assistant secretary for health affairs and chief medical officer for the Department of Homeland Security and a 1996 graduate of the medical school, gave the keynote address.

Garza's address kept the crowd chuckling at jokes and anecdotes, but he also delivered some heartfelt advice.

"Now that you have success, be humble, not arrogant," he said. "You've acquired a substantial amount of knowledge here at MU, but remember that you don't know everything."

Garza ended his address with the same advice he gave to his staff in Washington, D.C.: "Go forth and do good things."
New GI Bill fulfills veterans' college dreams

By Tim Barker
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
05/16/2010

After leaving the Navy in 2008, Emily Eckert set out on an unlikely journey that included a year of college in Alaska before returning home to St. Louis University, a school she once thought untouchable.

"I applied here as a joke," said Eckert, of Overland. "I didn't think I would get in. And I didn't have the money."

Turns out she was wrong on both counts. After being accepted to the school, she learned about a significant change to the government program that puts veterans through college. In her case, it meant that all of her tuition — even at private school rates — would be covered.

The new Post-9/11 GI Bill, which took effect last summer, is sparking enrollment gains across the nation by making it easier for veterans to attend private schools, pursue graduate degrees and, for the first time, to send their children to college.

Nationwide, participation in veterans education programs has spiked by more than 140,000 in the last year as the new GI Bill joins the existing Montgomery GI Bill. And area colleges and universities are eager to see what enrollment looks like this fall, as more veterans return home to a better understanding of what the bill means.

"All indications are pointing to an increase in enrollment because of the changes," said Rod Sievers, a spokesman for Southern Illinois University Carbondale, which has 750 veterans on campus.

The measure has been praised by college administrators for being easier on veterans, even if it is considerably more complex than the older Montgomery GI Bill, which provides a simple 36-month stipend of $1,300 a month.

The new measure offers separate living expenses, tuition payments and an annual book stipend. It allows benefits to be transferred to spouses and dependents. And it has a companion Yellow Ribbon program in which schools make deals with the Department of Veterans Affairs to reduce or eliminate tuition not covered by the basic bill.

"The new GI Bill is good," said Carol Fleisher, director of the Veterans Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia. "But it is very, very complicated. And just when you think you know it, they change it. Not a lot. But a little."
Over the last year, participation in the Montgomery GI Bill dropped by more than a fourth nationwide as 222,179 people started using the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

At the University of Missouri, the ability to transfer benefits, alone, accounted for a significant jump in GI Bill enrollment last fall at the school, where more than 350 students were receiving some form of veterans education aid, compared with 163 the previous fall. The number is expected to grow next fall.

Among those receiving transferred benefits is Sarah Bustamante, 21, of Chesapeake, Va., the daughter of a Navy captain. For Bustamante, a junior who is splitting the benefits with a younger brother, it's an opportunity to focus exclusively on school during her final two years. Gone is her part-time job.

"Not having to work this semester was actually kind of awesome," Bustamante said.

Interestingly, campus administrators say the new bill isn't always the best option for actual veterans, particularly in-state residents attending public universities.

"It varies from individual to individual," said Diana Johnson, associate registrar at the University of Missouri-St. Louis

Consider, for example, a veteran who is using Missouri's own Returning Heroes program, which sets tuition at $50 per credit hour. (Illinois also has a program that eliminates tuition.) Under the Montgomery Bill, payments are sent directly to the student. A student could pocket the difference between the higher government rate — up to $269 per credit hour in Missouri — and the $50 per hour charged by state schools.

That advantage is lost under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which makes tuition payments directly to the university.

Another reason to stick with the Montgomery package is the fact that even after those benefits are exhausted, a veteran is still eligible for another 12 months' worth of benefits from the new bill.

That provision has offered a significant boost to the legal dreams of Nick Haynes, who left the Navy in 2005 with his sights on a law degree from the University of Missouri. Haynes, a missile and gun technician, just had to figure out how to pay for it.

After using up his Montgomery benefits, he'll be able to use the extra 12 months of coverage to make a solid dent in his law school campaign.

"I'll come out of school with much less debt than I would have otherwise," said Haynes, of Kansas City.

Perhaps the biggest beneficiaries of the new measure, at least locally, are the private schools.
looking to capture more veteran students through the Yellow Ribbon program, which offers a way to offset the higher tuition charged by those schools. Details vary from school to school, but it basically creates an arrangement where the school and Veterans Affairs Department split the tuition costs not covered by the bill.

That's meant significant increases in enrollment at private schools such as Illinois' McKendree University, where the veteran population increased 43 percent from fall of 2009 to spring 2010.

No longer do those students have to scramble for scholarships and loans to make up for the shortfalls in their GI Bill support, said Betty Kutilek, assistant registrar at Maryville University.

A student there faces tuition of $612 per credit hour, while the Post-9/11 GI Bill pays only $269 per hour. Maryville's Yellow Ribbon program eliminates the difference between those two rates.

Typically the school has no more than 30 veterans on campus. Last fall there were 42. And the number is expected to top 50 in the coming fall semester, she said.

"The government has decided to help those soldiers coming back," Kutilek said. "Now they have more opportunities to go to their school of choice."
UM denies newspaper request for records regarding Big Ten talks

By The Missourian staff
May 14, 2010 | 6:57 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri system declined to provide records of correspondence by Athletics Director Mike Alden involving any mention of the Big Ten Conference, citing a provision of the Sunshine Law that protects records regarding contract negotiations or sealed bids and proposals.

The Missourian on Tuesday issued a request under the Missouri Open Records and Meetings Law asking for copies of any written or electronic correspondence of Alden's that included any mention of the Big Ten since Dec. 1. It also asked for records of any correspondence between Alden and Big Ten Conference Commissioner Jim Delany since Nov. 1.

But David Russell, senior associate vice president and chief of staff for the UM system, said in an e-mail response to the Missourian that any such records, if they exist, "clearly would be exempt from disclosure."

Russell, who is custodian of records for the university system, also said the records might be closed under a provision that says governmental bodies can close records pertaining to legal actions or litigation.

Sandra Davidson, an MU journalism professor, adjunct professor in the School of Law and the Missourian's attorney, said Russell's response is "correct, as long as you have contract negotiations going on. It's in the public interest that all these negotiations not be made public, of course, because it could have an adverse effect."

Russell's response shed no light on whether documents pertaining to negotiations exist.
“Your request appears directed, in whole or in part, towards documents that you believe may exist regarding a potential membership agreement with the Big Ten Conference, a subject of much recent speculation and publicity,” Russell wrote to Missourian reporter Pat Sweet, who submitted the initial request. “Without confirming or denying that such documents exist, please be advised that any such documents, if they exist, clearly would be exempt from disclosure ...”

Russell cited Section 610.0121(12) of the Sunshine Law. Section 610.021 generally outlines when public governmental bodies can close meetings or records. The exact text of Section 12 exempts:

“Sealed bids and related documents, until the bids are opened; and sealed proposals and related documents or any documents related to a negotiated contract until a contract is executed, or all proposals are rejected.”

Davidson called Russell’s response “very carefully worded.”

“It does a pretty good job of keeping his cards close to his vest. ... It may be his way of saying that he is not going to do a search for something that might exist, but if it existed you couldn’t get it anyway.”

Davidson said it appears from Russell’s response that there is presumption by UM that the Missourian assumes contract negotiations with the Big Ten Conference are under way and that it seeks records proving that. The Missourian, however, sought any correspondence by or with Alden regarding the Big Ten, no matter how casual. And it sought the same regarding correspondence between Alden and Delany.

Davidson said the Sunshine Law carries “a presumption of openness, and that means the burden is on the person trying to close the records” to prove by citing the law why they should be closed.

Russell left open the possibility that some documents might be released.

"If you would like us to search for other, non-exempt documents that might be responsive to your request, please let me know and we will provide you with an estimate of the costs associated with document search and duplication," he wrote.
By filing the request, the Missourian sought to shed light on the status — or existence — of any talks involving a possible move by MU to the Big Ten. Conversation about that possibility began in December when the Big Ten announced that it would begin looking at expansion.

Adding one team would allow the Big Ten to begin conducting a lucrative conference championship game. But reports indicate that the league could add as many as five teams, bringing its total number to 16.

Another factor is the lucrative Big Ten television network, which distributes between $18 million and $22 million annually to each of the conference's teams.

By comparison, Missouri received just less than $8.4 million from the Big 12 in 2007, the last year for which tax documents are available.

The Big Ten last expanded in 1990 when Penn State University joined the league, giving it 11 members.

Further discussions of conference expansion could take place next week when Big Ten athletics directors meet in Chicago beginning Monday. Basketball and football coaches will join the meeting later in the week. A presidents and chancellors meeting is scheduled for next month.

The Big 12 holds its spring meetings the first week in June in Kansas City.
DEAR READER: MU, Big Ten expansion news: the big catch everyone's chasing

By Tom Warhover
May 14, 2010 | 11:15 a.m. CDT

Dear Reader,

There was blood in the water Monday.

No bodies. Just blood.

The info-sharks bit anyway.

Picture sheriff Martin Brody (Roy Scheider) in the old "Jaws" movie, shoveling a slick of fish guts and blood over the boat, watching it spread as the boat trolls the seas.

Now picture the Big Ten.

For the second week, a single source led to a frenzy of news and speculation that added little to the collective knowledge.

For those whose whole world doesn't revolve around the issue, a synopsis: The Big Ten announced late last year that it was studying expansion.

**Speculation about Missouri swimming away from the Big 12 immediately began.**

Which brings us to Monday.

"The Big Ten Conference has extended initial offers to join the league to four
universities including Missouri and Nebraska from the Big 12, according to multiple sources close to the negotiations.”

Kevin Kietzman wrote that lead in the 810 Blog on the Kansas City radio station’s website.

I first saw the news in an e-mail referencing a Twitter post. The thing spread Internet-fast.

Great story, if true.

Newspapers across Big 12 and Big Ten markets — a huge chunk of the country — picked up the story, in a sort of backdoor way.

The Missourian’s response was fairly typical.

The sports desk didn’t just parrot the report. Reporters took a couple of hours trying to determine the veracity of the Kietzman blog.

When the button to publish was pressed, it was by way of a denial story. “The Missouri athletics department is denying a report by a Kansas City sports radio station that MU has been extended an offer to join the Big Ten conference,” the lede said.

Another variation, from The Indianapolis Star: “Notre Dame has not received an offer to join the Big Ten Conference, according to people familiar with the situation, disputing a report today from a Kansas City radio station.”

Or the Omaha World-Herald: “Nebraska officials shot down talk Monday that the Big Ten Conference has offered an initial invitation to join that league.”

You could find essentially the same story in Orlando or Newark, in Chicago or Minneapolis.

The denials allowed the newspapers to report this tantalizing radio blog bit, even if the “news” here was the litany of official types saying there was no news.
So it would appear that Kietzman got it wrong. Or that his sources were misinformed. Or that he should have used the future verb tense, as in “will extend offers.”

One editing decision Monday — whether to confirm the 810 Blog post — was easy. Missourian editors scrambled several reporters and made multiple calls to sources in the MU athletic and administrative offices.

The other — whether to publish — is always more difficult.

Immediacy is one of the core Missourian strategies. Getting you the news quickly is important. The definition of quick compresses with each new technological advance. Days and hours are now minutes and seconds.

Speed smacks into the value of independent verification. You should be able to assume a certain level of vetting before a piece of news falls under the Missourian banner.

Publishing reports by other news outlets comes down to a few critical questions:

• How much do I trust this publication?
• How sound are its sources? (Anonymity makes this nearly impossible to judge.)
• Can I independently verify or deny it?
• How widespread is the report? In this case, would many Missourian readers be left with the impression that the supposed Big Ten offers were accepted fact?

That last question led to Monday’s decision.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch’s Vahe Gregorian points out that the will-it-or-won’t-it drama has played out before — almost 17 years before.

That's not as long as "Jaws"; did you know the movie celebrates its 35th anniversary this year?

This most recent release of "Big Ten, The Expansion" may not run for more than another month or two before officialdom makes things, um, official.

But don’t be surprised if another blog post churns up the waters again.
If Mizzou leaves Big 12, what about the rivalry with KU?
By Blair Kerkhoff
KANSAS CITY STAR
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KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Big Ten Conference expansion isn't just an issue for athletes, fans and administrators at the University of Missouri to consider.

Kansas City -- and two other close Big 12 schools, Kansas and Kansas State -- have just as big a stake in whether the Tigers stay or go.

Kansas City is a college sports nerve center with the attendance and economic impact figures to prove it.

But if the Big Ten plucks Missouri, as has been widely speculated, Kansas City's college sports identity will change.

What becomes of the Border War? The annual Missouri-Kansas football skirmish at Arrowhead Stadium has become a can't-miss affair that generates more than $1 million a year for the game's visiting team. But Kansas athletic director Lew Perkins told The Kansas City Star it would be difficult to continue an athletic relationship with a team that had left the conference.

Could the Big 12's basketball tournaments and football championship games be conducted in a state that no longer had a member school? It hasn't happened in any sport in the conference's 14-year history. And would the city welcome Big Ten schools the way it does the Big 12?

The good news for Kansas City -- and the Jayhawks and Wildcats -- is that the Big 12 remains intent on surviving should it lose members. Replacing teams, operating with one or two fewer members, and cooperating with other conferences are options. Last week, conference athletic directors met with their counterparts from the Pacific-10 to discuss a television contract and scheduling alliance.

"We're being proactive," Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said.

Which means staying together as a conference without Missouri, and possibly Nebraska, as has been speculated.

There's a growing fear that a wave of conference realignment would prompt Texas, one of the country's richest athletic programs, also to leave the Big 12, effectively dissolving the league. But sources in the Big 12 have told The Star that Texas is not looking to leave.

Longhorns athletic director DeLoss Dodds reaffirmed his school's stance to Texas newspapers
last week.

"It's a great conference. It's been good to us, and I hope it continues to be that," he said.

As reported multiple times by the Post-Dispatch, Missouri has not received an official offer from the Big Ten, which announced in December it would explore expansion for 12 to 18 months. Missouri officials, including athletic director Mike Alden, have said the school will not comment on speculation related to conference realignment.

Even if the Big 12 goes on with Kansas and Kansas State, but not Missouri, Kansas City would feel a sense of loss. Missouri has never been anything other than a Big Six, Big Seven, Big Eight or Big 12 member, with Kansas City as a base, either officially or unofficially, for those conferences. The Big Ten has its offices in the Chicago area, and its men's basketball tournament is played in Indianapolis.

But many Tiger fans in Kansas City seemed excited about the prospects of a new address. In a Kansas City Star online survey this year that asked, "Should Missouri join the Big Ten?", 63 percent said yes.

In a recent poll on STLtoday.com, 54 percent among 4,000 were in favor of Mizzou moving to the Big Ten.

And like the parents whose child is about to be married, Kansas City wouldn't be losing a team but gaining a conference.

"I don't think being in the Big Ten would affect Missouri's relationship with Kansas City in a negative way," said Mark Vickery, former president of the Kansas City Tiger Club. "It would be an opportunity for the city to get to know some new teams on a more regular basis -- a Michigan, an Ohio State. It's like we've done with Texas and Texas A&M."

Vickery hopes the Border War contest -- in all sports -- would continue if the Tigers and Jayhawks found themselves in different conferences.

"I just can't imagine not playing them every year, and at least once a year in basketball," Vickery said. "Missouri-Kansas at Sprint Center would make our game in St. Louis look like child's play."

That would be Missouri-Illinois, which has become one of the nation's most intense non-conference basketball encounters. Scottrade Center is split down the middle, like the Mizzou-Illini football game at Edward Jones Dome and Missouri-Kansas football at Arrowhead.

But Perkins said KU hadn't discussed whether it would continue to play Missouri if the Tigers were in the Big Ten. Could the oldest football rivalry west of the Mississippi River be in trouble?

"If a school -- not even talking about Missouri -- if a school in our conference doesn't want to participate in our conference," Perkins said, "it would be difficult to continue having an athletic
relationship."

Alden declined to comment.

Missouri-Kansas games have counted in conference standings for more than a century. Those schools were among the five at the table at the Midland Hotel in Kansas City on Jan. 12, 1907, to start what originally was known as the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association. Nebraska, Iowa and Washington University of St. Louis were the others.

Iowa State and Kansas State soon joined, and most have been together ever since, with their proximity to Kansas City and large alumni bases here as common links. Along with basketball.

"The impact college sports has had on our region, the history and tradition -- it's just one of those things that's uniquely Kansas City," said Bill Hall, president of the city's influential Hall Family Foundation.

"If Missouri left (the Big 12), I think you'd lose an awful lot of excitement."