Missouri's political money man gives $1.4 million to MU music

COLUMBIA, Mo. • A Missouri couple has donated another $1.4 million to University of Missouri music programs.

The university announced the donation from the Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield of Westphalia Monday night. The donation from the Sinquefields' charitable foundation will be paid over three years to support the Mizzou New Music Initiative and the Creating Original Music Project at the university. It will also fund scholarships and provide other support for the university's School of Music.

The university said in a news release that the Sinquefields' hope the Mizzou New Music Initiative will make the university a leader in composition and performance of new music. The Creating Original Music Project is a statewide contest for K-12 student composers.

In 2009, the Sinquefields gave $1 million to the university's music department.

Last year, Sinquefield bankrolled a $2 million statewide campaign to return control of the St. Louis Police Department to the city. He also donated to Mayor Francis Slay's re-election campaign and since 2008 -- when the state eliminated limits on political contributions -- he has donated millions to various candidates and political action committees.
A new donation from Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield will fund continued music initiatives at the University of Missouri.

The $1.4 million gift over the next three years will pay to continue and expand the Mizzou New Music Initiative and the Creating Original Music Project at the university. It is a continuation of support the Sinquefields — Westphalia residents known for their political and philanthropic donations — have provided for music composition at MU for more than eight years.

The gift also will fund scholarships and other support for the MU School of Music.

According to a university news release, the Sinquefields’ goal for the Mizzou New Music Initiative is “to create an incubator for the composition and performance of new music, and to position Missouri as a major center for the music of tomorrow.” The Creating Original Music Project is a statewide contest for K-12 student composers.

The gift was to be announced at Monday night’s annual Chancellor’s Concert at the Missouri Theatre. The concert features the world premiere of this year’s winner of the Sinquefield Composition Prize, “Missouri” by MU graduate student David Witter.
Sinquefields pledge $1.4 million to MU music programs

Over the next three years, a $1.4 million grant by Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield will help pay to continue and expand music initiatives at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Specifically, the grant will fund the Mizzou New Music Initiative and the Creating Original Music Project, a statewide contest for K-12 student composers, at the university. The goal of the Mizzou New Music Initiative is to “create an incubator for the composition and performance of new music, and to position Missouri as a major center for the music of tomorrow,” according to a university news release.

The donation is a continuation of support the Sinquefields have provided for music composition at MU for more than eight years, the Columbia Daily Tribune reports. The gift will also fund scholarships and other support for the MU School of Music.
Anthropologist, marriage scholar top MU symposium

COLUMBIA, Mo. — A prominent anthropologist and a family historian who's also a best-selling author top the agenda for an annual University of Missouri science symposium.

Napoleon Chagnon (SHAG-nehn) is best known for his field research in Venezuela with the Yanomamo tribe. The new Missouri faculty member will read from his memoir, "Noble Savages: My Life Among Two Dangerous Tribes - the Yanomamo and the Anthropologists."

Chagnon was scheduled to speak at 5 p.m. Tuesday in the Bond Life Sciences Center as part of the school's Life Sciences & Society Symposium. This year's theme is "Claiming Kin."

Also scheduled to appear is Evergreen State College researcher Stephanie Coontz, a frequent commentator on family relations and author of the 2005 book "Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage."
$1.4 million donation to MU School of Music will fund scholarships, programs

By Maddie Aberman
March 11, 2013 | 9:11 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The 10th annual MU Chancellor’s Concert started on a high note.

Before the concert, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton announced a $1.4 million contribution from longtime supporters Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield to the MU School of Music.

“They have truly made the University of Missouri an incubator for new music,” Deaton said while introducing Jeanne Sinquefield.

Their contribution will help fund new programs including a recording program and a lab for students to work on film scoring. The money will also contribute to the students’ education by commissioning more compositions and bringing in more guest composers and performers to speak to the students.

“My goal is to make Missouri a mecca for composition,” Jeanne Sinquefield said. These additions will help expand the Mizzou New Music Initiative and Creating Original Music Project. The Sinquefields have supported these programs in the past.

“It was my first year as the director when Jeanne came in to my office and said, ‘What can we do with $1 million?’” said Robert Shay, director of the MU School of Music. “Since then, hundreds of pieces have been composed, and so many people have been touched.”

In the four years since the Sinquefields’ original $1 million donation, the MU School of Music has been able to fund full-ride undergraduate scholarships, six graduate student assistantships, faculty and staff positions, the Mizzou International Composers Festival and a distance-learning program where people can send in pieces to be critiqued by graduate students studying composition.

After the announcement, the MU Chancellor’s Concert began, including the world premiere performance of the 2013 Sinquefield Prizewinning composition, “Missouri.”
The piece was composed by MU graduate student David Witter and was performed by the MU Philharmonic Orchestra.

“I hope you enjoy as much as I do listening to a piece of music that would have never been written or performed,” Jeanne Sinquefield said. “Even if I don’t like it, I’m still happy.”

*Supervising editor is Karen Miller.*
The MU School of Music received a large monetary donation at the 10th annual Chancellor’s Concert Monday night in Missouri Theatre.

Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield of Westphalia gave $1.4 million to the school to develop its department of music composition. The money will be used to expand the Mizzou New Music Initiative, an effort to expand the funding and support of new music at MU, the Creating Original Music Project and the Sinquefield Prize, an annual competition for MU composers. The donation will support the commissioning of music, guest composers to MU, guest performances for the students of the school and the development of a film score laboratory for students.

“I have been overwhelmed by the success of the MNMI,” Jeanne Sinquefield said in an MU news release. “Since the program began, more than 300 new pieces of music have been written, performed and recorded — some more successful than others, but all providing valuable learning experiences for their composers. And when a composer succeeds, there is nothing better than listening to a beautiful piece of music that you have encouraged to be written.”

Alumnus Michael Anderson, a former Sinquefield Prize winner, attended the concert and spoke to the crowd. He described his win, which included a commission to compose a piece for the University Philharmonic, as a transformative experience.

The Chancellor’s Concert featured performances from the top ensembles from the School of Music, including the University Singers, Concert Jazz Band, University Wind Ensemble, Show-Me Opera and University Philharmonic.

Graduate student David Witter, a Sinquefield Prize winner, premiered the commissioned piece he wrote, “Missouri,” which featured solos by Witter on the trombone and Director of Jazz Studies Arthur White.

Witter said the art mural “A Social History of the State of Missouri,” in Missouri’s State Capitol served as his inspiration for the piece. The piece will be recorded as a part of the prize.

“The premiered piece was very interesting, almost chaotic, and seemed to weave all of the sections together beautifully,” junior Chris Chandler said.

In 2009 the Sinquefields donated $1 million to the School of Music to provide full tuition to select undergraduates, a distance-learning program, funding for faculty and staff, and funding for the Mizzou International Composers Festival. Jeanne Sinquefield said she wants to make Missouri a “Mecca for composition.”

Chancellor Brady Deaton and Michael O’Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science, were present for the concert and announcement.
“Rarely do you see such a long-term commitment to a project like the Sinquefield's have shown with their dedication to promoting the creation of new music,” O'Brien said in an MU news release. “Their gifts to MU have given the School of Music a tremendous advantage in attracting top-notch students and faculty. Students now know MU is the place to be if they want to study music composition.”
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Vote for MU non-tenure-track faculty voting rights postponed

By Katie Yaeger
March 11, 2013 | 2:00 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — MU’s Faculty Council is postponing a vote that, if passed, would expand the definition of faculty, which would give non-tenure-track faculty members voting rights in campus matters.

The election was supposed to open Monday for tenured and tenure-track faculty members. A firm date for the election has not been set but is expected to be in the next week or so, Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer said.

The election had already been postponed once from its March 4 start date after the Faculty Council decided to re-examine the voting process to ensure votes could not be tampered with or cast multiple times.

Council members are still deciding which online system to use. Options discussed include the Division of Information Technology’s Shibboleth service, Qualtrics and SurveyMonkey. Paper ballot voting was proposed.

Executive committee members Clyde Bentley, an associate professor of journalism, and Stephen Montgomery-Smith, a professor of mathematics, will meet with representatives from the Division of Information Technology to determine whether Shibboleth will fulfill the requirements for the voting process.

At its Thursday meeting, the council will decide whether to accept proposed changes to the wording of the motion and further discuss the committee overseeing the voting process. The committee, which has not been finalized, will consist of Faculty Council members.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
Dean of MU graduate school to leave for ASU

George Justice, the dean of the MU graduate school, will be leaving the university to accept the position of dean of humanities in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University, Provost Brian Foster announced last week.

“I’m sorry to see George leave,” Foster said in a press release. “He has provided excellent leadership for the Graduate School and has achieved a number of significant goals. We thank George for his contributions and wish him the best as he takes an important step in his career path.”

Justice said he joined the MU faculty in 2002 as a member of the English department. From there, he became assistant dean of the graduate school in 2006, becoming an associate dean a year later and interim dean two years after that. In 2010, after a national search was conducted, he was offered the position of dean.

As dean of the Graduate School, Justice said he tried to expand the reach of many programs to make them more useful to students.

“As far as the areas I’ve focused on, online was certainly one of them, but I’ve tried to help build up interdisciplinary programs, specifically the masters of public health program and the MU Informatics Institute,” Justice said. “I think I’ve done a good job of helping these programs reach more students.”

In an MU News Bureau news release, Justice said that, though he is looking forward to the new challenge that ASU provides, he is saddened by having to leave MU.

“It has been a great privilege to work at MU as a faculty member and as dean of the graduate school,” Justice said in the release. “Our university is blessed with outstanding students, brilliant faculty and ethical, dedicated leadership. Each day on campus provides me and our entire community with the opportunity of learning new things, developing new skills and making new contributions to knowledge.”

Under Justice’s guidance, the online programs offered by the Graduate School have increased significantly.

“I tried to work with programs around campus to encourage that they work to develop online programs with the help of Mizzou Online,” Justice said. “The role I had in the process would be facilitating curriculum reviews and encouraging programs to take the initiative to go online.”

Justice said he was nominated for the position of dean of humanities by a friend who is a faculty member at ASU. Justice sent in a letter of application and was chosen after a series of interviews and meetings. He was notified of the final position only a few days before the provost announced Justice’s decision.

In the release, Justice emphasized he felt the position gave him the ability to help make a difference at a forward-looking university in the area of higher education.
Historic drought is over in the St. Louis area — for now

7 hours ago • By GEORGINA GUSTIN ggustin@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8195

MU MENTION P. 2

Remember the historic drought of last year? That parched, unrelenting pizza oven of a summer, beating down on us day after rainless day?

Well, it’s over. Officially. At least in some parts of the state — and for now.

The U.S. Drought Monitor’s latest update shows that, for the first time in nearly 9 months, soil conditions in St. Louis, St. Louis County and the eastern half of St. Charles County are back to normal, which means those areas now join the southeastern third of the state, which has been officially in the drought-free category for weeks.

“The drought map hasn’t looked this good for our state since last spring, so it’s good news,” said Pat Guinan, the state climatologist, on Monday. “We’ve seen 7 to 8 inches of rain and big snows since the end of January, and that’s more than twice what we typically get.”

Last year’s drought, at its peak in August, consumed much of Missouri, with nearly 100 percent of the state experiencing “extreme” or “exceptional” drought. In Illinois, the situation wasn’t much better, with 85 percent of the state experiencing extreme drought or worse. The conditions decimated lucrative corn crops, threatened soybeans and burned up hay and grass fields, leaving cattle and dairy farmers desperately searching for feed. Some weak or young livestock just died in the field.

But, thanks to recent snow and rain, things seem to be moving in the right direction.

“All of the creeks in our area were completely dry,” remembered Denny Mertz, a corn and soybean farmer from Elsberry, about 60 miles north of St. Louis. “Now, as a result of the snow and rain we’ve had here the past month, creeks are starting to flow and we’re seeing water standing on top of the ground, which is a good thing.”

Not all areas are faring as well. Today, the western edge of Missouri is still under severe drought conditions, while the middle swath of the state is under moderate drought. For some farmers, the situation doesn’t look much better now than it did three months ago.
“We’re still very, very dry,” said Blake Hurst, head of the Missouri Farm Bureau, who farms in the northwestern part of the state. “We don’t have a bit of snow on the ground.”

The extreme drought persists, too, in Iowa, Minnesota and Kansas, where frozen ground is preventing recent precipitation from penetrating the soil. In Missouri and Illinois, the mild weather leading up to the recent snowfalls meant the ground didn’t freeze, allowing moisture to seep in.

“Iowa, Minnesota — they’ve gotten some good rains and snow, but with the ground frozen, it’s not getting into the soil,” said Michael Timlin, of the Midwestern Regional Climate Center at the University of Illinois. “There’s several inches on top of the soil, and that could end up in the rivers, not sinking into the soil.”

For Missouri and Illinois, while the recent snow and rain have helped, they didn’t completely erase the possibility of another tough summer for farmers.

After extended droughts, soil moisture typically takes more than a year to recover, hydrologists say, and that means any progress made in recent weeks easily could disappear if the rains don’t keep falling.

“A drought, especially one of this magnitude, could take two years,” said Randall Miles, an associate professor of soil science at the University of Missouri. “Could we get out of the drought in a year? It’s possible. But the problem is we’re so depleted of moisture, particularly in the lower depths of the soil, it could take longer.

“We could get some rainfall that would carry us into the spring,” Miles added, “but we need a deep recharge to carry us into July and August.”

Weather predictors suggest that rainfall from St. Louis to the east has a 40 percent chance of being above normal, which could bode well for the eastern half of the grain belt.

Overall, though, farmers don’t seem especially optimistic, given how long it usually takes to recover from a dry spell like last year’s.

“Some of the estimates we’re hearing about record corn and soybean yield — I’m kind of skeptical about those at this point, because of the level of the ground water,” said Mertz, the farmer from Elsberry. “The only thing which could possibly benefit us is if we continue to get timely rains through June, July and August.”

Still, they’ll take what they’ve gotten these past several weeks.

“When I go to meetings and hear people talk, they sound a little better,” said Hurst, of the farm bureau. “People are more optimistic today than they were 90 days ago.”
Space observers hope to see comet soon

Viewing is best just after sunset.

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Val Germann is holding his breath and keeping an eye on the sky, waiting for Comet Pan-STARRS to appear along the western horizon as early as Monday night.

"It has put on a pretty nice show in the Southern Hemisphere," Germann said of the comet discovered in 2011. "We don't know yet how visible it will be."

But if all goes as expected, Germann said the comet now should be visible in Mid-Missouri to the naked eye. As a member of the Central Missouri Astronomical Association and guest lecturer at the Laws Observatory on the top floor of the Physics Building on the University of Missouri campus, Germann has bright expectations for the comet's presentation.

"It will be an imminently photographable comet if it comes through for us," he said.

The Laws Observatory will be open for free public viewing from 7 to 10 p.m. tomorrow through Thursday, and the Morrison Observatory on the campus of Central Methodist University in Fayette will be open Thursday night. The comet eventually might be visible without a telescope or binoculars.

In fact, if the sky is clear tomorrow and Wednesday night, Pan-STARRS will be visible next to a slender crescent moon at dusk in the western sky.

Officials at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory told The Associated Press that the best time to view the comet is about 40 minutes after sunset.

Sunset today in Columbia is at 7:12 p.m. The comet might appear as a sort of exclamation point in the evening sky, with the point being the comet itself and its tail stretching nearly straight up from the horizon.

"The weather is the wild card," Germann said. "It's relatively low in the west, so the sky has to be clear to see it."
The comet could remain visible for about a month, moving along the western horizon from a point due west into the northwest sky.

Germann called Pan-STARRS a "room service or supper-time comet" because of its evening appearance. Observers have described the comet as having a fan-shaped tail.

Pan-STARRS is thought to be billions of years old, originating in the distant Oort cloud — a cloud of icy bodies well beyond the orbits of Neptune and Pluto. It has never passed by Earth before.

Pan-STARRS could serve as a warm-up for stargazers. Astronomers say a much brighter comet is on the way this fall. Comet ISON is expected to be visible during the early daylight hours in November and December.

Neither Pan-STARRS nor ISON poses a threat to Earth, scientists have said.
MSA organizes Engineering Week advocacy rally in Jeff City

Almost a year after MU students marched on Jefferson City to make their voices heard during the More for Less campaign, a different group of students rallied at the capitol to catch lawmakers' attention.

About 40 MU School of Engineering and Missouri Students Association students rallied at the Missouri State capitol building Monday for E-Week Advocacy Day, MSA Legislative Advocacy Officer Samantha Green said.

"The primary goal was making the engineering students' voices heard down in Jefferson City," MSA Legislative Coordinator Ben Levin said. "Politicians down there hear from lots of (political science) majors, they hear from lots of history majors, they rarely hear from students who economically give the most benefit back to the state."

The rally coincided with the 110th Engineers' Week, a celebration of MU College of Engineering history, traditions and the future of engineering.

Levin said MSA leaders were excited to hear from and interact with engineering students.

"We worked closely with the St. Pat's Steering Committee and (College of Engineering Dean James Thompson)," Levin said. "It was a real team effort. They were excited and as helpful as we could have hoped for. The dean especially was a huge ally and we are very grateful."

Students also had a more pragmatic cause for marching on Jeff City — House Joint Resolution 14, sponsored by Missouri House Speaker Tim Jones, is working its way through the House of Representatives. If passed, it would grant nearly $70 million in state capital bond funding to MU for a renovation of Lafferre Hall.

MU requested $68,419,000 from the proposal in January. Lafferre Hall Building Coordinator Marty Walker said there are two plans being considered for the potential renovation project.

"Option one would be to renovate the existing Lafferre Hall complex, add storage and three to four floors," Walker said. "The other option would be to fix (Lafferre) up, the air conditioning, electrical, and to build an external building across the street and adjacent to (Engineering Building West)."

HJR14 was discussed in a public hearing last month. Levin and MSA President Nick Droege testified in favor of the bill. The House Committee on Appropriations and Job Creation will begin deliberating HJR14 on Tuesday.
Levin said MSA was optimistic about the future outcome of HJR14, which is not currently scheduled for a vote in the House. If approved there, HJR14 must be reconciled with its sister Senate bill, SJR3, and will ultimately make it onto a Missouri ballot for voters to decide the fate of the funding.

"We're optimistic," Levin said. "It's a long process, and there are still lots of things that could go wrong. We've gotten closer to it than we have in 10 years."

If the bill is passed by voters, the construction project itself may not begin for a few years, Walker said.

Plans for the building are not expected to be complete for another year and a half.

"You have to select the architect, then the architect has to give you plans, and the plans have to be approved," Walker said.

Walker said he expects the new building to be complete in about five years.

After the success of the More for Less campaign and now E-Week Advocacy Day running smoothly on the statehouse steps, Levin said this direct style of legislative advocacy is something MSA might consider in the future.

"We think it's very effective," he said. "When the leaders of More for Less sat down we said there were kinds of things we needed MSA to continue planning. This event was in the same vein as More for Less."

Green reiterated the event was a chance to advocate for MU's engineering students and to make their needs known to Missouri legislators.

"It was a great chance to get the engineering students off the back burner and to show them they're not forgotten about," she said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Dance Marathon donates more than $150,000 to MU Children's Hospital

By GH Lindsey
March 11, 2013 | 6:44 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Dancing 13.1 hours was a big task, but it got big results.

On Saturday, Mizzou Dance Marathon raised more than $150,000 “for the kids” to become the largest student-run philanthropy at MU.

"It was completely and totally unreal," said Annie Bastida, the group's executive director. "I had a Children's Miracle Network rep sitting next to me, and he told me that we were going to be the 18th-largest dance marathon in the country, and I just started crying in a silent room."

The announced donation of $152,402.44 is the minimum amount that will be given to MU Children's Hospital. The organization's online donation portal will remain open and accept donations until April 1.

This year's donation will dwarf those of previous years. Last year, the organization donated $59,000 of the more than $76,000 it raised. The money raised this year came from a variety of sources including a silent auction and merchandise sales, but fundraising made up the bulk of it.

“Everyone put in so much effort to make this year the success it was,” Kate Mcintyre, head of public relations for the group, said. “Now, we’re looking forward to supporting more Miracle Kids and raising even more money for the children’s hospital at the 2014 main event.”

The group has also made a $75,000 yearly pledge to Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals that will fund music therapy, the salaries of part-time teachers and a program that gives active duty soldiers the opportunity to see their children via a video chat.

Dance Marathon’s participation grew this year to 934 registered participants, almost doubling last year’s mark of 557. This boom in membership was a result of a new leadership structure and expanded recruiting efforts.
“Mizzou Dance Marathon has focused a lot on recruitment this year, reaching out to all of the MU student organizations, Greek members and residence halls,” McIntyre said. “We also started recruiting a lot earlier this year beginning with Summer Welcome.”

The organization’s new approach allowed more people to become involved by splitting up duties and allowing members to take on more specialized roles, Bastida said. For example, public relations and recruitment were both handled by a single committee in the old structure.

“It just didn’t really make sense,” Bastida said. “So we separated things out this year and added more specialized steering committee members.”

Mizzou Dance Marathon’s main event for 2013 is over now, but the group is already looking to build on its successes.

“We’re trying to encourage people to stay with it,” Bastida said. “We’re working to make a culture of Dance Marathon at Mizzou.”

*Supervising editor is Karen Miller.*