Arvarh Strickland, MU's first African-American professor, dies

By Jacob Kirn
May 1, 2013 12:00 a.m. CDT

Arvarh Strickland, MU's first African-American professor, is shown in a 1990 photograph. Missourian file photo

COLUMBIA — Arvarh Strickland, the first black professor at MU and longtime advocate for minority hiring in higher education, died Tuesday morning. His death was confirmed by Otto Steinhaus, former pastor at Missouri United Methodist Church.

Dr. Strickland graduated from Tougaloo College in Mississippi in 1951. He went on to earn a master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Illinois.

In 1969, Dr. Strickland became the first black professor at MU. He taught history.

Throughout his career, Dr. Strickland criticized the university's reluctance to hire and promote more black professors.

"You have not availed yourself of the diversity and broadened perspective which black faculty members can bring" to these positions, Dr. Strickland told an MU chancellor in 1978.
Dr. Strickland also advocated for aid to black students through his work on the Ethnic Minorities Committee.

"I hope we are about to make a leap," he told the Missourian in 1978.

In 1995, Dr. Strickland received the MU Alumni Association's Distinguished Faculty Award. He retired the next year, and the university dedicated a meeting room in the Memorial Student Union to him.

The university established the Arvarh E. Strickland Distinguished Professorship of African-American History and Culture in 1999.

Following a demand by the Legion of Black Collegians that Chancellor Brady Deaton name a campus building after a black leader, the General Classroom Building was renamed Strickland Hall in 2007.

"We are still not where we should be in the appointment of African-Americans to the faculty," he said following the dedication. "Just the presence of African-Americans on the faculty makes African-American students feel like this is more of a place that they belong."

Visitation will be at 9:30 a.m. Saturday at Missouri United Methodist Church, 204 S. Ninth St. Services will follow at 11 a.m. Internment will follow at Memorial Park Cemetery, 1217 Business Loop 70 W.
Budget battle revolves around revenue projection

House criticizes Senate's plan.

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at 2:00 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — A fight over a relatively small amount of money represents big differences between what House and Senate budget leaders want to do with an apparent surplus that is building in the state treasury.

House Speaker Tim Jones, R-Eureka, yesterday denounced what he said is an unbalanced Senate budget. He spoke as the House was voting to send 13 spending bills with the $23.8 billion operating budget to a House-Senate negotiating committee.

The Senate budget plan exceeds the consensus revenue estimate reached in December, Jones said. "They have sent us an unbalanced budget."

In reply, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said the House is ignoring extraordinary revenue growth that could leave the state with a surplus of $400 million or more on July 1. "This is a lot of posturing," he said.

Lawmakers have until May 10 to complete work on all spending bills. Democrats were defeated yesterday in a last-ditch attempt to fund expansion of the Medicaid program under the 2010 federal health care law, an effort that they knew was doomed when it began.

One source of delay could come when Schaefer's committee hears testimony tomorrow from a federal agent who obtained a list of concealed weapons permit holders. The outcome of that hearing could decide whether Schaefer agrees to restore cuts in the Department of Revenue, Office of Administration and Department of Public Safety.

The budget negotiations could have a significant impact in Columbia. The House approved a $20 million overall increase for colleges and universities, and the Senate included $34 million, with about half of the difference slated for the University of Missouri.
In addition, Schaefer earmarked $10 million for expanded medical education through a partnership between MU and hospitals in Springfield, and the State Historical Society of Missouri is slated for a $400,000 increase from this year's appropriation.

At a news conference after Jones spoke, House Budget Committee Chairman Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, said the Senate operating budget spends $4 million more from general revenue than the estimate of almost $8 billion. The House spent $300,000 less than the estimate, Stream said.

Schaefer said he doesn't see much difficulty in reaching an agreement on operating funds. It is how to use the surplus — even whether lawmakers should acknowledge it exists — that could create difficulties, he said.

State revenue this year has been growing faster than the 4.8 percent increase projected. As of yesterday, Schaefer said, revenue has increased 11.5 percent for the year. If the current trend continues, the state will receive $492 million in unanticipated general revenue.

Schaefer wants to spend a lot of that money through the capital improvements portion of the budget, starting with $211 million to rebuild Fulton State Hospital. "You cannot act like this money is not there," Schaefer said.

On the floor yesterday, Jones said budget writers should act like the money does not exist. "Just because we have had a couple of good months doesn't mean the economy is on solid ground."

He was backed by Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, who is a one-time budget committee chairman. "To break the consensus revenue estimate is, I think, the worst thing that a legislator could do," he said. "The point is you come to an agreement, and that's the number, and that number needs to be stone."

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Hotel workers enlisted in human trafficking fight

5 hours ago • Associated Press

MU MENTION P. 2

From five-star boutique properties to low-rent rooms for rent along the interstate, hotel workers are trained to not pry into their guests' private lives.

But with growing concern over forced prostitution and other forms of human trafficking, the hospitality industry is starting to demand that its employees get a bit nosier.

"There's anonymity," said Amanda Evans, a front desk manager at the Budget Host Inn. "You can be there and not even be noticed."

Burns was among a group of local hotel managers, housekeepers, front desk clerks and maintenance workers who gathered Tuesday afternoon for a training session sponsored by the Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition. Workshop organizers said that hospitality workers are particularly valuable in recognizing possible warning signs of abuse, whether the victims are teenage sex slaves or immigrant housekeepers turning over the wages to a labor boss.

There's also a bottom-line component, acknowledged Susan Bell, general manager of the Hampton Inn & Suites near the University of Missouri and president of the Columbia Hospitality Association, which hosted the event.

"In our industry, if a community doesn't feel safe, we're not going to draw visitors," she said.

The Columbia session is part of a broader nationwide effort to combat human trafficking in the travel and tourism industry. In September 2012, Texas-based Sabre Holding, which owns Travelocity, unveiled a
training program called Passport to Freedom. Companies such as Delta Air Lines, Hilton and Wyndham Worldwide are among the hundreds to have signed a voluntary code of conduct to deter child prostitution.

State lawmakers are also cracking down.

In Jefferson City, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon endorsed a 2011 law that extends the maximum sentence for trafficking-related offenses from 15 to 20 years. On April 22, Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback signed a similar bill into law. The new law adds the new crime of commercial sexual exploitation of a child to state statutes, classifying the violation as a felony punishable by up to 25 years in prison.

The Columbia workshop gave an overview of such efforts but also taught participants to keep a closer watch on their own guests.

Coalition trainer Deb Hume, a University of Missouri public health professor, outlined some of the potential warning signs: guests without luggage; cash transactions; third-party reservations; repeated refusals of requests to clean rooms; frequent visitors; and more obvious signs, such as teens wearing overly suggestive clothing and young guests accompanied by older companions who don't appear to be family members.

Hume acknowledged that some of the behaviors deemed potentially suspicious could instead be benign, while some workshop participants noted the fine line between vigilance and excessive oversight. In the end, Hume's advice boiled down to a simple message.

"Trust your instincts," she said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Rock-A-Thon 2013 for cancer research breaks philanthropy record

By Jeong An Choi
April 30, 2013 | 2:40 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Members of MU's Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity raised more than $123,000 for the American Cancer Society. The total shattered the fraternity's record of $82,000 in 2011.

Despite drizzle and cloudy skies, fraternity members stood on street corners in downtown Columbia for about 50 hours total, from Thursday to Saturday.

MU's chapter of the fraternity is known to hold the largest single-chapter philanthropic event in the nation, according the chapter's website.

Rock-A-Thon started in 1969 when one fraternity member was chosen as the "Rocker" to sit in a rocking chair for 63 hours straight at the corner of Ninth Street and Broadway. The rest of the fraternity members stood on street corners collecting donations.

The event became a tradition and is held every two years.

Brendan Lyss was elected to sit on the stage this year. His brother and father are both cancer survivors.

"I was always interested in it since freshman year," Lyss said. "Because my family members have had cancer, I feel this event very close to my home."

Alex Silverman, the event's public relations chair, attributed this year's success to the fraternity's preparation and the fact that members heavily promoted the fundraiser on Facebook and Twitter. Silverman also works as a sports reporter at the Columbia Missourian.

Another boost to this year's efforts was the new Rock-A-Thon golf outing, Silverman said. Also, the fraternity had more help than previous years.
“We have a bigger house and more men than two years ago,” Silverman said.

But, the fundraising went beyond the streets of Columbia, according to the website. People from across the state donated money online and showed their appreciation for Rock-A-Thon through Facebook and Twitter.

“We sent few guys to St. Louis and Kansas City for canning in front of grocery stores,” Silverman said. “Many of our members are from those areas.”

At 9 p.m. Saturday, a crowd gathered to watch Lyss stand up from the rocking chair, which concluded the event.

“The rainy weather wasn’t a big deal to me,” Lyss said. “Sitting in the chair for 63 hours is nothing compared to people suffering from cancer.”

Supervising editor is Emilie Stigliani.