Arvarh Strickland, the University of Missouri’s first tenured African-American professor, has passed away. Strickland began his career at MU in 1969. Until he retired, Strickland, a nationally known historian, participated in curricular changes and directed undergraduate and graduate studies at MU, where he was largely responsible for increasing African-American enrollment and for transforming MU’s culture.

Strickland, whose classes were often overbooked due to a high interest from students, taught at MU for 26 years until his retirement in January 1996 when he became professor emeritus. He also served as interim director of the Black Studies Program on two separate occasions. He completed his term as international president of Phi Alpha Theta, an honor society for undergraduate and graduate students and professors of history, in 1995 and his term as chair of the advisory board/nominating committee in 1997. Locally, in 1995, he completed his term on the University of Missouri Press Committee and as chair of the System’s Thomas Jefferson Award Committee.

During the final years of his active teaching career and the first years of retirement, Strickland was the recipient of several honors and awards. In 1994, he received the University of Missouri’s Byler Distinguished Professor Award and the St. Louis American’s Educator of the Year Award. In 1995, he was awarded the Alumni Association’s Distinguished Faculty Award and was placed in the Tougaloo College Alumni Hall of Fame. In 1997, he received an Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and distinguished service awards from the State Historical Society of Missouri and Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society in History. In 1999, he received the Carter G. Woodson Medal from the Association for the Study of African-American History and Culture.

In 1998, the Missouri Endowed Chair and Professorship Program, established with the support of the state’s legislature, created the Arvarh E. Strickland Distinguished Professorship in African-American History and Culture. The distinguished professorship recognizes Strickland, author of History of the Chicago Urban League and editor of Lorenzo J. Greene’s volumes Working with Carter G. Woodson, A Diary, 1930-1933. Currently, Wilma King is the Strickland Distinguished Professorship in African-American History and Culture.
In October of 2007, MU renamed the General Classroom Building as Arvarh E. Strickland Hall. The building became the first named after an African-American faculty member at MU.

“Arvarh Strickland was most well-known for the countless number of students he mentored over the years, both in their academic pursuits and in their personal challenges,” said Mike Middleton, deputy chancellor at MU. “Because of his contributions, MU’s history department is noted as one of the nation’s leaders for doctoral degrees granted to African-Americans.”

In addition to a classroom being named after him, Strickland also has a room named in his honor in the Memorial Student Union on MU’s campus.

“It can truly be said that Dr. Strickland’s presence on this campus has transformed the very culture of this institution,” Middleton said. “We celebrate Dr. Strickland, not because he is African-American, but because he is a great historian, scholar, teacher, colleague and citizen – because of the skill and dignity with which he took on and accomplished the monumental task of paving the way and setting the stage for faculty of color that have followed him at this great university.”
First black professor at Mizzou dies at 82

When Arvarh Strickland arrived at the University of Missouri in 1969, he was the first and only African-American faculty member on the Columbia campus.

“I didn’t mind being first, but there’s no distinction being the only one,” he later recalled. He quickly set out to change that by recruiting more minority students and faculty.

After he died on Tuesday (April 30, 2013) at age 82, the university called his efforts a success.

“It can truly be said that Dr. Strickland’s presence on this campus has transformed the very culture of this institution,” Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said in a statement. University officials announced his death but didn’t know the cause. He lived in Columbia.

Professor Strickland was the university’s first tenured African-American faculty member. He was a historian, scholar and teacher. He was so popular, his classes were often overbooked, the university said. He helped create the Black Studies Program and twice served as interim director. He taught at the university for 26 years and retired in 1996. He remained an active scholar at the university as emeritus professor.
He was not shy about criticizing his bosses for failing to hire and promote blacks. He recalled incidents that made blacks feel unwelcome.

He recalled fans' unfurling Confederate flags at football games. And he remembered the day in the 1970s when a stadium security guard pulled a gun on black students who unfurled their own banner to protest the Confederate flags.

"There is a problem of finding black people in positions that don't carry minority titles," he told the Post-Dispatch in 1989. "In most of the middle managerial kinds of positions — the assistant and associate deans who run the university — there just doesn't seem to be a way for blacks to break in."

The university says that is changing. Of 1,985 faculty members last fall, the university says it has 57 who identify themselves as black or African-American. Of 34,748 students, the university says it has 2,462 who are African-American.

Professor Strickland gave students much of the credit for increasing the numbers. They kept pressure on the administration to make changes and didn't let up through the years, he said.

Professor Strickland was born in Hattiesburg, Miss., graduated from Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Miss., and earned master's and doctoral degrees at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Mizzou hired him in 1969 to teach black history courses.

The funeral will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Missouri United Methodist Church in Columbia. Burial will be at Memorial Park Cemetery in Columbia.
First black professor at Mizzou dies at 82

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - A retired University of Missouri historian who broke racial barriers as the school's first tenured black professor has died.

The university announced Wednesday that Arvarh Strickland died on Tuesday. He was 82.

Strickland retired from the university in 1996 but remained active in Columbia as a community leader. The university honored him in 2007 by renaming what had been known as the General Classroom Building as Arvarh E. Strickland Hall.

Strickland joined the Missouri faculty in 1969 from Chicago State College. He grew up in rural Mississippi, attended Tougaloo College and earned his doctorate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Services for Strickland are scheduled for Saturday.
First black professor at Mizzou dies at 82

21 hours ago

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Strickland joined the Missouri faculty in 1969 from Chicago State College. He grew up in rural Mississippi, attended Tougaloo College and earned his doctorate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Services for Strickland are scheduled for Saturday morning at Missouri United Methodist Church in Columbia, with internment at Memorial Park Cemetery.
MU’s first African-American professor dies at age 82

The University of Missouri on Wednesday mourned the death of the first African-American professor to be hired on the Columbia campus.

History professor Arvarh Strickland, 82, died Tuesday in Columbia. He started his career at MU in 1969, a time when the nonviolent resistance portion of the civil rights movement had begun spreading across the country. Today, MU has 57 African-American faculty members.

“He was a huge deal for us in terms of civil rights,” said Christian Basi, a university spokesman.

As a pioneer on campus, Strickland, a nationally known historian, is credited with helping increase African-American enrollment and for transforming MU’s culture, school officials said.

He taught at MU for more than 26 years before retiring in 1996. As a professor emeritus, he continued to serve the university in a variety of capacities.

MU officials said his classes were always packed.

“Arvarh Strickland was most well known for the countless number of students he mentored over the years, both in their academic pursuits and in their personal challenges,” Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said in a statement.

“Because of his contributions, MU’s history department is noted as one of the nation’s leaders for doctoral degrees granted to African-Americans.”

In 1998, the Missouri Endowed Chair and Professorship Program, with the state’s General Assembly, created the Arvarh E. Strickland Distinguished Professorship in African-American History and Culture.

Six years ago, MU renamed its General Classroom Building as Arvarh E. Strickland Hall.
MU's first black professor, Arvarh Strickland, dies

By Karyn Spory

"Icon," "gentleman" and "mentor" were all terms used to describe Arvarh Strickland, the first full-time black professor at the University of Missouri.

Strickland, who died yesterday at age 82, graduated from Tougaloo College in 1951 before going on to the University of Illinois to earn his master's and doctoral degrees. In 1969, he was hired at MU.

"Dr. Strickland was really an icon around here," Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said.

Before Middleton became deputy chancellor, he was a student at MU — a student who was demanding more from the administration. One of those demands was to hire a black professor.

"The university found one who was truly exemplary," Middleton said.

Middleton and the world will remember Strickland as a "consummate historian," Middleton said, but those at the university will remember him as a "great gentleman, teacher, researcher, colleague and mentor."

Middleton added that MU was "lucky to get him and lucky to have him for so many years."

Steven Watts, a professor of history, described Strickland as a pioneering figure at MU. Strickland played an integral role in the formation of the Black Studies Department and worked to recruit new black faculty members.

"Arvarh used to say, 'I am happy to be the first, but I don't want to be the only black faculty member,'" Watts said.

MU Chancellor Brady Deaton said Strickland was fundamental in creating a vision for diversity at the university. "He was a tireless advocate for the broad-based perspective of diversity," he said.
He noted Strickland’s accomplishments as a faculty member and scholar as well as how he dealt with the societal responsibility of being the first tenured black professor. “He lived up to that and fulfilled it and did it with the grace and personal respect of others and the university in a way that students flocked to his classes,” Deaton said.

Russell Zguta, professor of history and department chairman, said he has thought a lot about Strickland since hearing about his death. Zguta recalled Strickland’s humor, his ability to calm a room and his unyielding encouragement.

“He was a man of dignity. He could bring a department meeting” from ruckus “to civility,” Zguta said.

Zguta said he is constantly reminded of his colleague, as most of his classes are held in Strickland Hall.

In 1994, Strickland received MU’s Byler Distinguished Professor Award, and a year later, he was awarded the Alumni Association’s Distinguished Faculty Award. In honor of his retirement in 1996, a meeting room in Memorial Union was named after him. In 1999, the Strickland Endowed Professorship in African American History and Black Studies was created. In 2007, the General Classroom Building was renamed after the professor.

Visitation will be at 9:30 a.m. Saturday at Missouri United Methodist Church, 204 S. Ninth St., with services at 11 a.m. Burial will be at Memorial Park Cemetery, 1217 Business Loop 70 W.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Arvarh Strickland was a force for change at MU and in Columbia

By Jacob Kirn, Mackenzie Bruce
May 1, 2013 | 7:49 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — When longtime friends and colleagues talked Wednesday about Arvarh Strickland's accomplishments at MU and in Columbia, they used words such as distinguished, level-headed and dignified.

For Eliot Battle, the loss is great. Battle co-founded the Minority Men's Network with Strickland and was the first African-American faculty member at Hickman High School.

"I miss him already," Battle said. "It's like losing a brother."

Strickland was a force for change at MU and in Columbia. The first black professor at MU and a lifelong advocate for minority hiring in higher education died Tuesday morning at age 82.

Strickland was an honored professor and administrator. In 1995, he received the Alumni Association's Distinguished Faculty Award. When he retired after 26 years with the university in January 1996, a meeting room in the Memorial Student Union was dedicated to him. He was also a trustee for The State Historical Society of Missouri.


The university established the Arvarh E. Strickland Distinguished Professorship of African-American History and Culture in 1999. And in 2007, MU honored his impact on campus by naming a building after him.

"I think his real legacy is the students he touched," MU Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said at a news conference Wednesday at Jesse Hall. "It really goes beyond MU."
From Mississippi to Missouri

Arvarh Strickland was born on July 6, 1930, in Hattiesburg, Miss.

His father wasn’t involved in his life, and he was primarily raised by his mother and her parents.

Strickland graduated summa cum laude from the historically black Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Miss., in 1951.

He married Willie Elmore a couple weeks after graduation, excluding him from the draft for a few years. The couple had two sons: Duane and Bruce.

After teaching at a black high school in Hattiesburg, Strickland began attending the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana for his master's degree in 1953.

Around this time, the draft board changed its mind about Strickland’s deferment because of increasing pressure from the Korean War. Strickland served two years, spending most of his time in Maryland.

After serving in the military, he returned to the University of Illinois, where he received his doctorate in 1962.

Soon after, he began teaching at Chicago State University on the south side of Chicago where he became an active member of the predominantly African-American community.

In 1969, MU hired Strickland to teach a few courses in black history, and he became the first African-American professor at the university. Soon after, he met Battle.

"We were both from the South; I was from Alabama and he was from Mississippi," Battle said. "We had a lot in common and fell in line as friends."

In the fall of 1970, Russ Zguta, the current chair of MU's History Department, met Strickland after Zguta returned from Helsinki from a research scholarship. His first impression of Strickland was his sense of humor and compassion.

"He would forever tease me about the weather here saying, 'If you think the weather is nasty here, just think what January was like in Finland,'" Zguta said.

After a couple years, Strickland was named the special assistant to then-Chancellor Herbert W. Schooling, for the recruitment of minority group instructors. The position was supposed to lead to an increase in the hiring of minority faculty members at the university.

From 1980 to 1983, Strickland was the chair of the MU History Department. Despite his administrative role, Zguta said the professors considered him "one of us."

After Strickland came to MU, Zguta said the university built a niche for African-American history at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Middleton, who became the first African-American law professor in 1985, remembers his advice as "always right on point."

Middleton, who became the first African-American law professor in 1985, remembers his advice as "always right on point."
Legacy

Throughout his career, Strickland criticized the university for its 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, he told an MU chancellor in 1978.

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.

"He had a big impact on the university and Columbia," his son Duane Strickland said. "He attracted a lot of talented people here."

After resolutions from the Legion of Black Collegians, Missouri Students Association and Residence Halls Association, the UM System Board of Curators voted to rename the General Classroom Building to Strickland Hall in 2007.

"I think that really touched him," Middleton said. "He really did love this university."

"He came in '69, and he did not leave," he said. "And he had all types of opportunities to go anywhere in the world because he was that well-known. But he liked the University of Missouri, and he was proud of what he was able to do here."

In a video shown before the building's dedication in 2007, Strickland said: "And so what I did was to stay here and try to fight to see that other African-Americans who came on the faculty and as staff would not have to refight those battles."

Strickland is survived by his wife of more than 50 years, Willie; his sons Duane and Bruce and their families; and a great-granddaughter, Pearl. He is also survived by many friends and MU faculty members.

A visitation will be at 9:30 a.m. Saturday at Missouri United Methodist Church, 204 S. Ninth St. Services will take place at 11 a.m. Interment will follow at Memorial Park Cemetery, 1217 Business Loop 70 W.
Steven Watts, MU history professor, wins Thomas Jefferson Award

By Katie Yaeger
May 1, 2013 | 5:30 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — MU history professor Steven Watts has written biographies on Walt Disney, Henry Ford and Hugh Hefner, and he has shared his expertise on several television shows.

On Wednesday morning, Watts was recognized for his service at MU, where he has spent 42 of his past 43 years.

The annual Thomas Jefferson Award recognizes an exceptional University of Missouri System faculty member who has worked at one of the four campuses for at least 10 years, according to the system's website. Watts will receive $10,000 and a plaque at the UM System Board of Curators dinner on June 13.

"Like Jefferson, Professor Watts has had an abiding interest in and lifelong commitment to public higher education, as his own educational background and professional career attest," History Department Chairman Russ Zguta wrote in his letter to the award's selection committee.
Watts said he has spent 42 of the past 43 years at MU. As a freshman in 1971, he took his first history course in Western civilization with Zguta.

"I have seen Professor Watts grow and mature, from being a fine undergraduate student to being an outstanding scholar and teacher," Zguta wrote in his letter.

Watts received his bachelor's degree from MU in 1975 and his master's degree from the University of Virginia in 1978. He then returned to MU for a doctoral degree, which he earned in 1984. He joined MU's faculty that year.

Since joining the faculty, Watts has taught an American history survey course each year, Zguta said. Watts said he also teaches upper-level American cultural history courses.

"I've always thought a historical perspective is a way to understand how the world works," Watts said.


Watts' work has been recognized internationally, Zguta said in his letter. He presented papers at the University of Paris in 1992 and at an international conference sponsored by the University of London in July 2012. In December, he talked about Hefner on national Irish radio in Dublin.

Watts received the Provost's Outstanding Junior Faculty Teaching Award in 1988 and the William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence in 1995.

A former chairman of the committee that chooses the winner of the Thomas Jefferson award, Watts said he knows how many qualified people were nominated and that he was shocked and honored to receive the award.

"It's a highlight of my career," Watts said.

After receiving the award on Wednesday morning, he joked that the department has been trying to find a way to get rid of him, and the award wouldn't help.

Supervising editor is Richard Webner.
House, Senate approve versions of FY2014 budget

With only three weeks left in the legislative session, lawmakers in both chambers are tackling higher education funding in their versions of the 2014 budget.

Last week both the Missouri Senate and House of Representatives approved all 13 appropriations bills that constitute their respective versions of the Fiscal Year 2014 operating budget. Each version was sent to the opposite chamber for reconciliation hearings this week. The General Assembly has until May 10 to pass a comprehensive version of the budget to take effect July 1.

Both plans call for a $34 million increase in funding to higher education institutions in Missouri and a $65.9 million increase for the state's K-12 schools. The bump in higher education funding comes from House Bill 3, which originated in the House and was sponsored by House Budget Committee Chairman Rep. Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood.

HB3 allots nearly $400 million to MU for general expenditures, a number not drastically different than the $397,780,981 allocation in the FY2013 budget.

The Senate version of the budget also calls for an across-the-board $500 raise for all state employees.

Senate Appropriations Chairman Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said there weren't radical differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget.

"On a lot of things, we're in agreement with the House," Schaefer said. "We did take the House position on the pay increase, the solid ($500) instead of the (2 percent increase), so there's always a few things that House members want, just as we have some things in the Senate budget (that some individual members want), and those are the kind of things that tend to get traded out as we go into conference."

An additional Senate bill specifically calls for a reorganization of the model Missouri uses to fund higher education institutions. Senate Bill 437, sponsored by Sen. David Pearce, R-Warrensburg, would create a new formula for calculating how much each public institution in the state receives in budgetary funding.

Currently, there are three methods by which the state can appropriate funding to higher education institutions: on a base-plus distribution or an across-the-board increase or decrease. Pearce's model would base funding on a calculation of each school's expenditures, divided into six categories: academic support, institutional support, instruction, public service, research and student services. Schools would further be categorized into one of seven sectors — associate, statewide technical education institution, bachelor, master, statewide liberal arts and sciences institution and research sectors — each with different factors into the budget calculation.

"It's tough because we have 13 public 4-year institutions in the state," Pearce said. "And they're all different — they're in different parts of the state, they have different missions and to come up with one
standard to fit all is very, very difficult. I think it's a step in the right direction. If you're doing well, if
you're meeting the standards which you've established for yourself, then you get rewarded. And if not,
then you're going to get less funding from the state."

Another bill sponsored by Pearce would change many of Missouri's scholarship programs.

Senate Bill 378 would raise the academic standards for Missouri high school students seeking an A+,
Bright Flight or Access Missouri scholarship. It would also require recipients of those scholarships to
enroll in 24 credits in their first calendar year in university.

"The scholarship programs only last for so long," Pearce said. "You can't stay in college for five, six,
seven years and expect the state to continue to pay for these scholarship programs. We're sending a
message that we want to be supportive, but we want to get you in and out as quickly as possible."

Pearce emphasized the goal of SB378 is to shorten the time Missouri students receiving these
scholarships take to obtain their degrees.

"The (private schools) do this very well," Pearce said. "The privates get the schools in and out in four
years, and one reason is because the cost is so high, and also for the traditional students, the parents
realize they want to get them in and out as quickly as possible."

Both SB437 and SB378 are still being deliberated in the Senate.
Women in Greek life launch campaign to build a school

By Caitlin Kerfin
May 1, 2013 | 7:58 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — About 100 women representing every sorority at MU gathered in The Shack restaurant in the Student Center to a lecture during Sisterhood Week.

The founder of the 3-year-old Circle of Sisterhood Foundation, Ginny Carroll, visited Tuesday to speak about the purpose of the MU Panhellenic Association’s philanthropy and its impact. The foundation’s goal is to empower sorority women to help impoverished women around the world to get an education. To the surprise of the crowd, Panhellenic President Paige Tenkhoff presented Carroll with a $20,000 check and a promise to fundraise in the fall to build a school in an developing country.

"I knew it was going to be a big deal because at delegation they were building it up. No one would tell us what it was, but I had no idea it would be as big as a school," Lilly Kraus, Kappa Delta's Panhellenic delegate, said. "It's really great for our women to see the impact of the organization." The donation came from Panhellenic funds, and the group had been anticipating the unveiling of the campaign for months.

"We talked with Ginny back in March and found out it was an obtainable goal for our community," said Jory Mick, vice president of public relations for MU’s Panhellenic Association. Donation stations were set up in The Shack and close to $500 was collected to jumpstart fundraising. MU is one of the first colleges to make Circle of Sisterhood a student organization and the first to commit to building an entire school on its own.

The group needs to raise $35,000 more to fund the building. It hopes to raise enough money for roofing by January. Once all funds are raised, the organization buildOn will tell them which country needs the school.

The members are not just giving a monetary donation, though. In June 2014, 14 sorority members will visit the site and help with building efforts.

Supervising editor is Zach Murdock.
If St. Louis hopes to grow its economy, it needs to get smarter. Now some local business leaders are trying to figure out how.

The St. Louis Regional Chamber this week is launching a broad push to increase the education level of the region’s workforce. And it’s doing so with a very specific goal for the region: becoming by 2025 one of the nation’s top 10 metro areas for share of adults with a college degree.

Today, St. Louis ranks 14th out of the nation’s 20 biggest metro areas, with 30 percent of adults holding at least a bachelor’s degree. Leapfrogging Los Angeles, Dallas, Philadelphia and San Diego will require about 75,000 more college graduates than the region would otherwise have, the Regional Chamber estimates.

“This is something we can do,” said Doug Koch, senior vice president and chief talent officer at Brown Shoe and head of the Chamber’s Talent Council.

But why?

People who study regional economics say there is a strong link — getting stronger all the time — between a place’s education level and its economic vitality.

Indeed, many of the best-educated metro areas in the country — Washington, San Francisco, Boston — also rank among the highest in household income, while some of the least — Tampa, Detroit, Miami — are toward the bottom of the charts in income.

This makes sense, said Jonathan Rothwell, who studies metropolitan economies at the Brookings Institute in Washington.

People with higher education are more likely to start companies. They are more likely to help the companies that employ them to grow. They are more likely to have the skills needed to be flexible in a fast-changing economy. And, simply put, smarter people earn more.

“It’s a pretty substantial premium and it gets slightly more for every year of education a person has,” Rothwell said. “Then those higher-income workers spend a significant share of their earnings buying local services, creating demand for people without a degree, too, in restaurants, retail and other industries.”
That creates more jobs throughout the region’s economy, and boosts the tax base needed to pay for schools and other services that help train people and grow companies and keep the economy moving, Koch said.

“It’s a virtuous cycle,” he said. “Why wouldn’t you want to do this?”

The question, really, is how. And that will be the focus of a summit the Chamber is hosting today, with business leaders, educational institutions and others, to start swapping ideas.

This project will take time, said Chamber president Joe Reagan, and there is no one answer. It will likely include everything from connecting college students with jobs that help them stay here to helping some of the 400,000 people who started college but never completed it to finish the job.

**CLEAR GOAL**

There are lots of people already working on many of these issues, Reagan said; the hope is to get them pulling in the same direction. There will be lots of talk of partnerships and maybe even the formation of committees. It is the kind of thing that can get real squishy, real fast — and that, Reagan said, is why they are setting a very clear goal: ”Top Ten by 2025.”

“That’s the North Star,” he said. “We want that really clear, sharp focus. We need to be in the top 10 of most-educated American cities.”

One person who will be listening with interest is Roderick Nunn. The vice chancellor for workforce and community development at St. Louis Community College, Nunn is glad to see the region’s civic establishment sharpen its focus on talent. He has read all the research and he agrees, smarter cities do better.

But he also talks with a lot of companies about what they need, and it’s not so much raw numbers of degree-toting workers as it is workers with specific skills.

“We’ve got to make sure we’ve got the right type of degrees, and we’ve got to make sure we’re training people with the right competencies,” he said. “That’s when we start to thread the needle more effectively.”

And some people say the region needs to focus younger. Ten percent of St. Louis-area adults don’t have even a high school diploma, notes Howard Wall, an economics professor at Lindenwood University. Too many who do graduate remain ill-prepared for either higher education or the workplace.

“Talk to employers, and what you hear is that basic literacy and adding and subtracting are a problem,” he said. “And you’ll have a lot more people to train to be machinists if you can get them through high school.”

Reagan doesn’t disagree. He talks about boosting the entire spectrum of education, from early childhood to adult learning, and helping everyone to climb the ladder. Focusing on college degrees, he said, is a measurable strategic goal.
It's an important one, said Koch. St. Louis is competing — for people, investment, jobs — with cities all over the globe, and the places that are winning are the ones coming up with the ideas that power the global economy. To keep up, St. Louis needs to get smart.

“We're on a world stage,” Koch said. “And the critical fuel is talent.”