Arvarh Strickland's legacy remembered at candlelight vigil

By Caitlin Holland

May 6, 2013 | 10:04 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — For MU senior Rachel Davis, the message conveyed at Arvarh Strickland’s candlelight vigil was empowering. It reminded her of stories told by her parents, both MU graduates, of discrimination they experienced as young adults and how they overcame it.

Davis said her mother, Desiree, who majored in nursing in the late 1970s, was the only African-American person in the program’s graduating class. When her mother reached out to an adviser for help finding a tutor, the adviser, instead, told her to switch her major. Davis said her mother didn’t take that advice.

She said her father, Lenny, experienced discrimination before graduating with a degree in engineering in 1980.

“Both of them walked out with their degrees,” Davis said. “To know that I can come here, and I can look at the department and see people who are like me, and know that there is a building named after someone who is like me, it just gives me hope for the future.”
The University of Missouri Legion of Black Collegians and iGUIDE Leadership Team sponsored the vigil in Strickland's honor on Monday evening, outside the academic building named for him. Strickland, who was hired in 1969 as the first black professor at MU, died April 30 at age 82.

Before he retired from MU in 1996, Strickland worked to improve minority-hiring efforts and increase black student enrollment.

The vigil included a prayer that Strickland's impact on MU be remembered, a poem recitation, a keynote speech from Kaylan Holloway, founder of the iGUIDE Leadership Team, and a dance and vocal performance.

MU senior Paetyn Cage said Holloway's speech about passing on your "light" to help others, represented by the candles held by the vigil's attendants, inspired her to continue Strickland's legacy.

"It didn't feel right to not show up for somebody who made all these accomplishments for me, who made all of this possible for me," she said.

In the vigil's closing remarks, Marnae Chavers, president of the Legion of Black Collegians, challenged those in attendance to think about what their impact on MU will be. Davis said Strickland's impact encouraged her to pursue her career and service goals, as well as motivate younger students to achieve what they want in school.

"It's just great to come back and pay respects to someone who blazed a trail so that you can walk it," Davis said. "That’s why I came out."

Supervising editor is Karen Miller.
MU Health changes concern union workers

Positions are being altered.

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Scores of union employees with University of Missouri Health Care might see their jobs reclassified as non-union as the result of a job consolidation pilot program.

MU Health officials said the multi-skilled worker pilot program is intended to increase quality care for patients, while members of Laborers' International Union of North America Local 773 said the program is nothing less than a "union-busting" measure.

Union members also have cried foul because they will have to apply for the consolidated jobs, which will be non-union, with no assurance that they will be retained.

"We don't believe they have the right to arbitrarily change union jobs to non-union jobs," said Regina Guevara, field representative for Local 773.

MU Health officials said the multi-skilled worker model is used by other health systems and addresses the MU system's priority of providing quality patient care.

The six-week pilot program began April 8 on select units at University Hospital and Women's and Children's Hospital. The two new positions being considered combine the unit clerk and nurse technician jobs for one position and the unit attendants, hospitality and patient transport jobs into the second position. Hospitality workers are the only non-union position on the list of consolidated jobs.

Guevera said 260 employees now fill the jobs that will be consolidated. Hospital officials have not confirmed that number or said how many positions will be filled under the two new job titles but said no jobs will be cut as a result of the program. Guevera said the new job model is expected to go into place in September before the start of MU Health's new fiscal year.

Mary Jenkins, public relations manager for MU Health, said the new positions are "designed to be more flexible and to provide more timely care to patients" and will provide more support to nurses and other health care providers.
"This model allows employees to function in a number of roles and respond more quickly to patient needs," she said.

Jenkins also said once the new model is in place systemwide, employees who "opt out of consideration" or who are not selected for one of the new positions will get help from the human resources department in finding another job in the health system. She said union employees who want another union-eligible position also will get help from the HR department.

The way union members see it, however, MU Health is simply joining a nationwide move to squash unions.

"They add just a few more job duties" to a different job title "to justify that it's a new job," said a Local 773 member, who asked not to be named. "They're basically just cutting out union jobs. And once they do it to us, I don't see what's going to stop them from doing it to those other people" in the health system who are unionized, including maintenance workers and carpenters.

Local 773 members have circulated at least two letters — one of which accuses MU Health CEO/COO Mitch Wasden with overseeing "union-busting efforts" — outlining their concerns. Guevara's name and contact information are on both letters, but she said she did not write the letters.

"We don't really want to make a comment at this time about what's going on," Guevara said. "We are in negotiations with University of Missouri Health Care. We are trying to eliminate this from happening."

The anonymous employee said union members also worry that MU Health could use the new model as a way of "weeding out" older or disabled workers.

MU Health announced a slew of administrative changes March 6, one month before the pilot program was put in place.

Jenkins said those changes, including merging the MU Health and School of Medicine finance departments, were related to the pilot program "only to the extent that we continually look for ways to operate as efficiently as possible."
MU to award 5,902 degrees on graduation weekend

By Miguel Sola
May 6, 2013 | 2:05 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — MU will award 5,902 degrees on graduation weekend, beginning May 17 through May 19.

The degrees include 4,218 bachelor’s degrees, 1,043 master’s degrees, 278 doctorates, 126 law degrees, 36 education specialist degrees, 99 medical degrees and 102 veterinary medicine degrees. Of those, more than 300 were earned online.

Events will begin at 1 p.m. May 17 with the College of Veterinary Medicine ceremony and will end at 3 p.m. May 19 with the College of Human and Environmental Sciences graduation, according to an MU release.

During the Honors Ceremony on May 18, MU will also award Columbia native journalist Peter Hessler an honorary degree. Hessler is known for his award-winning books on China and his contributions to the New Yorker and National Geographic.

Each school and college will hold separate ceremonies and many will invite notable guest speakers to address the graduates.

- Meredith Artley, managing editor and vice president of CNN Digital, will speak to the School of Journalism at 6:30 p.m. May 17 at Mizzou Arena.
- U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt will speak at the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources ceremony May 18.
- John Wright, from the Missouri House of Representatives, will speak at the College of Education ceremony May 18.

For more information, go to MU’s Commencement website.
Bank account of ex-UM coach Frank Haith may have been accessed illegally amid investigation

Former UM basketball coach Frank Haith filed a petition to find out if his bank account was breached during the Nevin Shapiro probe.

BY MICHELLE KAUFMAN
mkaufman@MiamiHerald.com

Former University of Miami basketball coach Frank Haith on Monday morning filed a petition in Miami-Dade federal court seeking subpoenas to try to uncover whether his checking account records were accessed illegally by unauthorized parties as part of the NCAA Nevin Shapiro investigation.

He and his attorney, Michael Buckner, want to be able to depose Bank of America employees and make sure the bank preserves evidence in anticipation of a civil lawsuit.

The Rule 27 Petition, obtained by The Miami Herald, states that in October 2012, Haith and his wife, Pamela, became suspicious of a possible privacy breach and have tried unsuccessfully to resolve the issue through repeated requests to the bank. If a Bank of America employee or agent permitted an unknown party to view or procure the records, it could be a violation of federal and state laws.

Haith, now at the University of Missouri, had been asked by the NCAA to provide microfiche copies of three checks dated June 10, 2010. He had already provided photocopies of those checks, and other financial documents, in October 2011, but the NCAA wanted clearer images. Each check was for $3,200 and made out to his assistant coaches — Jorge Fernandez, Jake Morton and Michael Schwartz.

Haith was told by the NCAA enforcement staff during a Sept. 5, 2012, interview in Kansas City, Mo., that the three checks were cashed by his assistants at the Bank of America branch across the street from the UM campus.

Haith has said the payments were for his coaches’ work at his summer camps.
Shapiro, the imprisoned former UM booster, claims he paid Morton $10,000 to help recruit DeQuan Jones and that Morton later repaid him the money. The NCAA is investigating whether the three $3,200 checks were used to repay Shapiro.

According to the petition:

"The [NCAA] enforcement staff contended the funds were used by an assistant coach to repay a booster.

"The enforcement staff theorized the loan from the booster was used by the men's basketball staff to secure a high-profile recruit's commitment to attend the University of Miami. Mr. Haith denied, and continues to deny, the enforcement staff's theory."

When Pamela Haith, the coach's wife, contacted the bank on or about Oct. 22, 2012, to request microfiche copies, she was told that "an unknown person may have viewed, ordered or was provided access" to those records, including, but not limited to the three checks requested by the NCAA. The Haiths later learned their account had been flagged by Bank of America as a result of the suspicious access.

Buckner, Haith's attorney, also suggested that some of the information the NCAA enforcement staff knew about the checks could only have been known if they had microfiche copies.

The NCAA has been heavily criticized for its mishandling of the UM case. Buckner stressed that this petition is against the bank, not the NCAA.

"I want to make clear we have no evidence against the NCAA or anyone else outside the bank," Buckner said.

"We filed this petition against the bank so that we can talk to witnesses and get the information we need to determine if anybody other than the Haiths had access to those checking account records. If we find out they did, we will sue. That breach would be a violation of federal law."

Buckner said he expects a hearing regarding the Haiths' petition will be held in U.S. District Court in about a month.
Haith files court petition related to suspected breach of bank records

COLUMBIA — Missouri coach Frank Haith filed a court petition Monday as part of an ongoing effort to determine whether Bank of America shared detailed records from his personal business account during the NCAA’s two-year investigation of the University of Miami.

The petition, which was filed by Pompano Beach, Fla.-based attorney Michael Buckner, states that Haith first learned of the possible breach last October, when the NCAA, as part of its Miami investigation, requested he send microfiche copies of three checks totaling $9,600.

“The bank employee that my clients talked to indicated that those microfiche copies had already been previously viewed or ordered,” Buckner said.

The petition states that Haith and wife, who spoke to the employee, did not previously view or order the copies, nor did they authorize anybody to have access to the account, and that Haith “subsequently learned its checking account had been flagged by Bank of America as a result of the illicit access.”

The bank subsequently ordered an investigation of the account to obtain information about the breach, and the petition states that in November, Haith was “informed by Bank of America employees that when the bank identified the person that breached the checking account, the bank would not contact” he or his wife “in an attempt to protect the bank.”

Buckner says a judge will review the petition and determine whether a hearing needs to be held. If so, the judge will then decide whether to grant the petition, which would then allow Haith’s lawyer to subpoena the bank and depose employees who may have had access to the account during that time frame. For now, the filing of the petition also prohibits Bank of America from destroying any important evidence.

Buckner is adamant that they have no indication the NCAA is involved. But an affidavit submitted by Haith’s wife, Pamela, states that she and her husband first “became suspicious” on Sept. 5, 2012, when the NCAA’s enforcement staff demonstrated knowledge of specific information related to the three checks that Haith and his wife “could not locate from the bank statements and check images in our possession.”

Those suspicions were furthered in October, when they “were advised by the NCAA enforcement staff that a ‘source’ had informed the staff that a microfiche copy of the checks was available.” The NCAA declined to reveal the source of that information.
“We don’t have any indication at this point that the NCAA is involved, I just want to make that clear,” Buckner said. “However, I will say that if anyone — including people at the bank or outside the bank — were involved, we will sue them.”

The petition is the latest NCAA-related development for Haith, one of four former Miami coaches who recently had their motions to get NCAA misconduct charges in the case thrown out.

Haith, who received a notice of allegations from the NCAA in February, is expected to send a written defense to the NCAA’s Committee on Infractions this month. He will then have the opportunity to defend himself against his “failure to monitor” charge in front of the infractions committee on June 14-16 at the NCAA’s headquarters in Indianapolis.
Report: NCAA declines to dismiss charges against Haith

By Steve Walentik

Missouri basketball Coach Frank Haith will still face charges in the NCAA's case against the University of Miami.

The Miami Herald, citing multiple sources, reported that Temple law professor Eleanor Myers, a member of the NCAA Committee on Infractions, informed Miami and four former coaches, including Haith, that she does not believe she has the authority to decide on the case without a hearing. The committee had given Myers the authority to make a ruling on the motions to dismiss filed by the coaches and the school.

Those motions were based on the NCAA's admission of misconduct in its handling of the investigation into allegations first made by disgraced Miami booster Nevin Shapiro.

Haith, the other coaches — former basketball assistants Jake Morton and Jorge Fernandez and former football assistant Aubrey Hill — and the school are scheduled to have a full hearing in front of the infractions committee June 14-16 in Indianapolis.

In other Haith-related news, CBS Sports reported today that Haith has filed a petition in Southern District of Florida federal court to determine if Bank of America authorized unknown people to see Haith's financial records during the NCAA investigation of Miami.

CBS reported that one of Haith's lawyers, Michael Buckner, is trying to determine whether information from canceled checks in the coach's account were improperly — and possibly illegally — obtained. If the petition is granted, Buckner will subpoena Bank of America employees who had access to Haith's account between Oct. 1, 2011, and Oct. 31, 2012.

Haith is facing charges of failure to promote an atmosphere of NCAA compliance and failure to monitor the activities of his staff.
MU medical students win award at national competition

By Brandon Weiss
May 6, 2013 | 4:34 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — For a record fourth time, the CLARION program's top prize has returned to MU.

Four MU medical students, all from different disciplines, took home the top prize in the national competition hosted by the University of Minnesota for their presentation on April 20. The team joins previous MU champions from 2005, 2009 and 2011.

"I think it means that inter-professionally, our students are able to work quite well together," said Suzanne Boren, one of the group's four faculty advisers. "It means that our students are getting the education in the problem-solving field that they can work on cases like this."

The team’s task was to create a presentation about how to improve health care for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, also known as COPD. All 10 teams in the competition analyzed a fictitious case study that involved four different people at four different hospitals in a fake community, and they had to offer suggestions for how the care of the patient in the situation could have been improved.

"It was a really good feeling immediately," team member Scott Bartkoski said of winning the contest. "It was reassurance we were on the right track."

Sabrina Abramovitz, Kaci Dannatt and Terri Stone joined Bartkoski to make up the winning squad, which defeated the University of Minnesota, University of New England and University of South Carolina as finalists.

After learning in late January that they would compete, Bartkoski estimated the team members put in "close to 100 hours" of work preparing their presentation. They met once a week for two hours through February and March, then doubled the meeting times in April.
"None of us realized how much time or work it was going to be," Bartkoski said. "That made us want to win even more, sort of make it all worth while."

The group's work was rewarded with a $7,500 scholarship that will be split among the team members.

"It shows tremendous dedication to see the students work so hard for this," Boren said. "It's a lot of hard work for them, and I'm happy that they were able to get the recognition that they deserve."

*Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.*
Farmers had crossed their fingers and said their prayers. But then they got what they wanted.

A decimating drought last year ravaged the country's corn crop and had farmers nervously hoping for a snowy winter or rainy spring to replenish parched farmland.

But now, after weeks of above-average rain, much of the nation's corn belt is a muddy mess, leaving farmers frustrated and planting weeks behind schedule, potentially cutting into this year's expected record crop.

"It's just mud out there. There's no chance, whatsoever, of getting anything done," said Greg Guenther, who grows corn east of Belleville. "Everyone's worried and annoyed, because it really should be in the ground, and we should be planting beans by now. Instead we're just looking at muddy fields."

Typically, growers in the St. Louis area have their corn crop planted by mid-April and are moving on to soybeans. But they're already more than two weeks behind, and the forecast doesn't look promising.

"We need some dry weather. I never thought I'd be saying that after last year," said Pat Guinan, a climatologist and assistant professor with the University of Missouri. "And unfortunately, we have another system moving in later this week."

For every day farmers are delayed getting their corn crop planted, yield potentially diminishes — which, after last year's drought-decimated corn yield, is particularly worrisome.

"More than any time in recent years, we need a good crop," said Rick Tolman, chief executive of the Chesterfield-based National Corn Growers Association. "We had such a bad year."

Rain predicted for later this week could mean fields — even under optimal circumstances — aren't dry enough to plant until next week, meaning farmers here would be nearly four weeks behind schedule.

"The whole corn belt is going to be way behind," said Emerson Nafziger, a professor of crop sciences with the University of Illinois. "Whenever we shorten our season up with late planting, we tend to decrease yield potential — and we would not expect a record yield after a start like this."

A U.S. Department of Agriculture report, released Monday, showed that the top corn-growing states had planted only 12 percent of their corn crop as of Sunday, whereas the historic average is closer to 50 percent for this time of year.
Farmers in Illinois, the country’s second biggest corn-producing state, had only planted 7 percent of the corn crop, compared to an average of 48 percent. In Missouri, farmers were faring slightly better: 22 percent of the state’s crop is in the ground; normally, it is above 50 percent.

“The rule of thumb for this area is that for every day after May 15, you’re losing a bushel of yield (per acre) for every day you wait,” explained Paul Bertels, a vice president with the National Corn Growers Association. “That’s almost here.”

This spring’s lower temperatures have also been a problem because corn needs soil temperature in the 50-52-degree range to germinate. So, last week, for example, when the weather was warm and dry, farmers held off, knowing the cold was coming back.

“They could have planted,” Bertels said. “But they knew it was going to get cold and wet again.”

A U.S. Department of Agriculture survey, released in March, found that American farmers intended to plant 97.3 million acres of corn this year, up for the fifth consecutive year, and the most corn acreage since the 1930s. Last year’s corn crop, predicted to be a record 14 billion bushels, instead came in around 11 billion, and yield was about 123 bushels an acre — 24 bushels below the previous year.

Conditions last year sent corn prices soaring, so this year farmers decided they would capitalize. In several states, farmers said they intended to plant more corn, particularly outside the corn belt. Within the corn belt, however, farmers appeared a little wary — in Illinois and Missouri, for example, farmers intended to plant less corn than last year.

“We were sitting here in January with producers asking us if they should plant any corn at all because there was no rainfall and the drought was very deep,” said Brent Myers, an agronomist with the University of Missouri Extension. “Now, here we are with the soil replete with moisture and no seed in the ground.”

Farmers now can only wait.

“I couldn’t even get across the field. I’d get stuck with the tractor, 6 to 12 inches deep,” said Garry Niemeyer, chairman of the corn growers association and a corn farmer from Auburn, Ill., in the center of the state. “Did I mention that patience is a good quality for farmers to have?”

When corn is planted late, problems can arise later in the season. Stalks tend to grow overly tall, making them vulnerable to high winds. Corn also likes milder temperatures to pollinate.

“The pollination period usually takes place around the Fourth of July,” Niemeyer said. “But if you plant in May, it usually happens later in July, and the hotter the temperature, the more potential for problems.”

If farmers don’t see better conditions in coming weeks some may decide to switch to soybeans, abandoning corn altogether, even though they’ve already invested in readying their fields for a corn crop. If they can’t get anything in the ground by June, insurance policies will kick in to cover some costs and make up for the losses.

Some may switch to different varieties of corn, such as hybrids that can tolerate a shorter growing season — if they can find them. Last year’s drought hit seed producers, too.
"The growing season isn't long enough," Tolman said. "So they'll switch to soybeans as the growing season slips away, or they'll switch to a different corn variety. But the dilemma is that because of the drought, we don't have a deep supply of seed."

Still, farmers will scramble for that seed if they have to because the crop could be especially valuable this year.

Last year, growers did well because the drought forced prices up, and those farmers who didn't bring a crop to market were covered by insurance. This year's late start could mean prices are up again.

For farmers, that's the only good news in the short term.

In this marketing year, which ends in August, the country expects to export 800 million bushels of corn, down from 1.5 billion last year and 1.8 billion the year before.

"We lost our export markets," Niemeyer said. "Now we need to grow those markets back, and to do that we need to grow more corn. We're trying really hard to do that."

But farmers have seen extremes from year to year before, and they are used to adapting. Besides, the window for planting isn't entirely closed — and growers have had good years even with late planting.

"We're concerned," Tolman said. "We're not panicked."
DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA FOOTBALL PARTY ZONE PLANS FIZZLE

Plans for a downtown Columbia party zone tied to University of Missouri home football games have fizzled for the second year in a row.

The Columbia Daily Tribune (http://bit.ly/15sZcZD) reports that the group of local business leaders who sought to organize a downtown "Tiger Town" on Missouri football weekends is again scrapping the plan.

Businessman Greg Steinhoff says the group was unable to overcome opposition by some downtown bar owners who worried the effort would hurt their business on fall football weekends.

Missouri's first home football game takes place on Aug. 31 versus Murray State. The first Southeastern Conference home game is Oct. 19 against the Florida Gators.