A year later, UM Press working on recovery

Catalog release marks progress.

By Karyn Spory

Monday, June 3, 2013 at 2:00 pm

It has been just more than a year since University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe announced plans to close the University of Missouri Press, and although the press has remained open, it is still working to regain its reputation.

"Frankly, a year ago, after the president's announcement, I couldn't envision this happening," said Clair Willcox, editor-in-chief and associate director of the press. "We're now at the point where we're picking up momentum."

After going without a spring catalog, the press recently released its Fall/Winter 2013 catalog. It features 10 new books, which is fewer than the 15 the catalog used to promote, but Willcox has hopes next spring's catalog will boast as many new books, if not more than, as in previous years.

The press was targeted for closure by Wolfe as a way to save money. However, word of the closure sparked widespread backlash — including authors threatening to sue for their book rights. The decision was reversed in August, and the press was moved from the control of the UM System to the University of Missouri campus.

"The announcement that the press was going to be closed caused a lot of people to leave, a number of authors to have second thoughts if they wanted their books published by the press and a number of people wondering if the press had any future," said Mel George, chairman of the Press Advisory Committee.

George said although the committee primarily was formed to help transition the press to MU, its real task was convincing people the press was not going to go away.

Although Willcox was rehired in October and the press began working toward building a catalog, there wasn't enough time to release the Spring 2013 catalog, and Willcox said that was a tough blow.

"That hurt us very badly," Willcox said, noting that it not only decreased revenue but created a "crisis of confidence" among authors and scholars.
"I have to assure" authors "time and again, with things like the new catalog ... that we're still around, and we have the support of our new administration," Willcox said. He had just nine weeks to put together the Fall/Winter 2013 catalog, which features four authors who had sought different publishers after the closure was announced but who came back after the decision was reversed.

Jane Lago, former managing editor of the press, was pulled out of retirement to serve as consulting director of the press and help with the transition. Lago said the experience has been a challenge, but it also has brought some excitement.

"It felt really good to feel like we're achieving something and we're making progress," she said.

In the meantime, the search is on for a director.

Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri, is the co-chairman of the search committee. He said the panel hopes to be able to bring finalists to campus this summer for interviews.

"Whoever steps into the position has a really strong foundation of the press's books and prints to build on and has an opportunity to really take the press into the future," Lago said.
Nixon appoints Cape Girardeau attorney to UM Board of Curators

By Rudi Keller

Monday, June 3, 2013 at 4:17 pm

Gov. Jay Nixon is trying again to place Cape Girardeau attorney Michael Ponder on the University of Missouri Board of Curators.

Nixon on Monday appointed Ponder, a member of the state Board of Education since 2009, to the Board of Curators for the second time this year. The nomination stalled in February in the Missouri Senate, and Nixon withdrew it to preserve his ability to reappoint Ponder.

Ponder, a Democrat, will represent the 8th Congressional District, filling a seat that has been vacant since the resignation of Judi Haggard of Kennett in January 2012. Because lawmakers are not in session, Ponder will be able to participate in meetings until the Senate confirms or rejects his appointment early next year.

Ponder graduated from the MU School of Law in 1990 and holds his undergraduate degree from Central Methodist University in Fayette. He is a partner in the Cape Girardeau law firm of Cook, Barkett, Ponder and Wolz.

Nixon appointed Ponder to the state Board of Education. If confirmed, Ponder’s term on the UM Board of Curators will expire Jan. 1, 2019.

Ponder could not be immediately reached for comment.

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Gov. Nixon reappoints Ponder to UM System Board of Curators

By Jessica Schlager
June 3, 2013 | 9:39 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — J. Michael Ponder has been reappointed to the UM System Board of Curators by Gov. Jay Nixon.

Ponder was first appointed Jan. 4 and served immediately on the board following his appointment because the Senate was not in session. But Nixon withdrew the appointment Feb. 6 after state senators raised questions about Ponder's policy decisions on the State Board of Education, according to The Associated Press.

Although some senators had said they would reconsider confirming Ponder if he were reappointed, the Senate adjourned this year's session May 17, allowing him to immediately join the board again.

Ponder graduated from the MU School of Law in 1990 and earlier received his bachelor's degree from Central Methodist University. He is currently a partner of the law firm of Cook, Barkett, Ponder and Wolz in Cape Girardeau, where he resides.

Ponder's term would end on Jan. 1, 2019, pending Senate confirmation.

Supervising editor is Jake Kreinberg.
Throughout the community, mortarboards have been thrown, gowns returned and life is moving on for high school graduates. Their success, it is hoped, breeds further success. The outlook is forward and congratulations sincere. A sampling of local schools points to their achievements both individually and collectively as they always will be known: The Class of 2013.

BRENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Small in number but mighty in spirit, 62 students graduated – 17 of them with GPAs more than 4.0 – on Friday, May 24. “This is not only a high achieving student group, this is a group of students who know what they want to do and have set goals for themselves and they maintain a their good nature throughout it all,” said Ivy Hutchison, college/career specialist. They were offered a total of $3.7 million in scholarships.

Their average ACT composite score was 24.35. Ten percent of the class scored at least 30 on the ACT, making them Missouri Bright Flight eligible. One graduate was appointed to the U.S. Air Force Academy, another is a national Hispanic Scholar and one is a National Merit Commended Student.

CHAMINADE COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

The class of 2013 continued the school’s legacy of scholarship, leadership and service. One hundred fifteen graduates, after applying to 153 different colleges, were admitted to academic programs across curricula – film and theater to prestigious engineering, business and medical programs. Scholarship grant offers added up to almost $11.8 million for academics, athletics, leadership and talent.

A tradition of giving back with student-led fundraising for the E Pluribus Unum Scholarship provided an annual $1,000 scholarship to an incoming senior, plus $1,001 to help seed an endowed scholarship.

Slightly more than half will attend out-of-state colleges, with 57 percent continuing studies at public schools and well more than half of that number expected to study in the
University of Missouri system. Two were drafted into the U.S. Hockey League, while one received a naval ROTC scholarship.

CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

The 212 members of the class of 2013 accumulated honors and scholarships, including more than $1 million in scholarship money across the country. Two students received half-tuition scholarships to Washington University, while one more earned a full tuition scholarship to Emory College of Arts and Sciences.

This year's accolades ranged from sweeping the Cappies Awards to a playoff run in varsity football for football recruit impetus. Top honors for the Globe Newspaper, TEAMS, WYSE, Model UN, Speech and Debate, DECA, Readers Theatre and other music awards and athletic feats rounded out achievements. As a group, the class is known as thoughtful, considerate, altruistic and inclusive to each other and the Clayton community.

CONFLUENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

On May 18, eighty-seven graduates crossed the stage enthusiastically into their future, 10 of them achieving special honors. The historic second graduating class of the Confluence Charter School sponsored by Missouri University of Science and Technology was accepted by more than 20 colleges and universities, many in the St. Louis area. In total, students earned $165,000 in scholarships.

Valedictorian Sasha Worthy is deciding between two colleges – Drury University and Missouri University of Science and Technology. Mary Moore, salutatorian, will attend St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley. Amira Mellon, senior class president also named Downtown YMCA's Youth of the Year, earned a scholarship to Lindenwood University.

HAZELWOOD HIGH SCHOOLS

Continuing a tradition of well-rounded scholarship, each of 1,261 graduating seniors of the three high schools participated in at least 50 hours of community service. Together, students at Hazelwood Central volunteered 40,791 hours, East provided 26,805 hours and Hazelwood West gave 42,928 hours to their community.

Scholarship awards added up to $11.8 million. Two Hazelwood Central students received full tuition scholarships. Kyle Jordan-DeDeaux was named a Gates Millennium Scholar, one of 1,000 students nationwide selected to study at the school of his choice. Kevin McPartland was awarded the University of Alabama Presidential Scholarship which required a minimum score of 32 on the ACT test.

STORY CONTINUES...