COLUMBIA — Agronomist Roger Mitchell, former dean of the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, was described as a generous man and friend to all by his family, friends and colleagues.

"He had overwhelming kindness toward everyone and anyone," said Peggy Kirkpatrick, executive director of the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri. "I've never met a man as kind and gentle as Roger Mitchell."

After serving as the dean of CAFNR from 1983 to 1998, Dr. Mitchell retired and became involved with the food bank, and he was on the board of directors for many years.

Kirkpatrick described Dr. Mitchell as a tremendous partner. She said he treated everyone who came in to the food bank like a king. He loved to work with children and students.

Dr. Mitchell died Tuesday, June 4, 2013, in Columbia. He was 80.

He was born Sept. 13, 1932, in Grinnell, Iowa, to Robert and Cecile Mitchell.

He began to work on the farm at a young age and started plowing by age 10.

"Because the plow didn't have a radio, he taught himself how to whistle," his daughter Laura Mitchell said. "He could whistle anything."

Instead of a growing up with a bike, Dr. Mitchell had a pony, which his mom made him ride to the grocery store, his daughter said. In high school, Dr. Mitchell was the quarterback and played Biff in his school’s production of "Death of a Salesman."

Dr. Mitchell met his wife, Joyce Lindgren, while they were students at Iowa State University, where he was majoring in agronomy and she was majoring in home economics. They married June 26, 1955.

As a past president of the Golden K chapter of the Kiwanis Club, Dr. Mitchell strived to get members working together as one.
"He was a good president and deft leader," Charles Dreyer, former chapter president, said.

In fall 2012, Dr. Mitchell brought members of the Golden K and the Smithton Middle School Builders Club to the food bank to build Buddy Packs.

"That was the epitome of Roger," Dreyer said.

Dr. Mitchell received his bachelor's and doctorate in agronomy from Iowa State University and his master's in agronomy from Cornell University.

He was on a tight budget and finished his doctorate while married with three daughters.

"He made the money from his fellowship last for a year by dividing it into 12 envelops," his daughter said.

Dr. Mitchell began teaching agronomy at Iowa State University and in 1962 was voted professor of the year by students in the agriculture college.

In 1969, he left Iowa State and took a position at MU as a professor and the chairman of the Department of Agronomy. Dr. Mitchell became the dean of the MU Extension division in 1972.

He worked as vice president for agriculture at Kansas State University in 1975 then became the executive director for the MidAmerica International Agricultural Consortium in 1981 and returned to MU shortly after.

As dean of CAFNR, Dr. Mitchell was a leader in the Food for the 21st Century program, which grew into an interdisciplinary research effort in food-related areas.

"He blended dignity, charm, character and intelligence with a genuine concern for everyone he met," Thomas Payne, vice chancellor and CAFNR dean, said, according to an article on the CAFNR website. "His was a life devoted to making good things happen – from great concepts like the Bond Life Sciences Center, and development of the exceptional collaborative program Food for the 21st Century – to a helpful word to a person struggling with a problem. This college and university benefited greatly from his presence."

Dr. Mitchell is survived by his wife, Joyce, four daughters, Laura Mitchell of Minneapolis, Susan Smith of Fairway, Kan., and Columbia, Sarah Feyerherm of Shawnee, Kan., Martha Mitchell of Las Cruces, N.M., and their families.

A memorial service will be at 3 p.m. Wednesday, June 12, at Missouri United Methodist Church, 204 S. Ninth St.

Condolences can be sent to rememberingrogermitchell@gmail.com.
Michael Nichols to retire as UM System research vice president

Wednesday, June 5, 2013 | 7:12 p.m. CDT; updated 8:26 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, June 5, 2013
BY Harrison McLean

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri System’s Office of Research and Economic Development will be going through changes with the impending retirement of a senior staff member.

Michael Nichols, vice president for research and economic development for the UM System, announced his retirement after almost six years, according to a May 28 letter from UM President Tim Wolfe. Nichols’ final day in office will be Friday.

Nichols has served in this position since December 2007 and had previously served for about a year as director of the Office of Technology Management and Industry Relations. He has been with the UM System since 1978 as a member of the research faculty at Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center.

Nichols accomplished a great deal during his time as vice president, overseeing several expansions and funding programs in the Office of Research and Economic Development, Wolfe said in his letter. Nichols’ direction led the Kauffman Foundation to recognize the UM System as one of only three university “Leaders in Communication.”

According to Wolfe’s letter, in addition to serving on six economic boards throughout Missouri and creating five programs to accelerate the commercialization of research, Nichols also led an effort to allow students more control and ownership of their intellectual properties, which was a first among universities.

Nichols’ job as vice president of research and economic development will not be filled specifically but will be covered by a new position that Wolfe announced in January. That post, however, has not been filled.

The new position, UM vice president for academic affairs, will serve as the chief academic officer for the four-campus system and oversee the research and economic development efforts that Nichols led.

"When the new vice president comes in we will look at what is the best structure for the department,” UM System spokeswoman Liz McCune said. “Research and economic
McCune said that finalists for the new position have been identified and that the job should be filled soon, but she gave no specific timeline. Nichols' current job will be held by the UM System Chief of Staff Bob Schwartz until the search is completed.

Nichols did not respond to calls for comment. His departure comes as Nikki Krawitz, UM vice president for finance and administration, is preparing to leave UM and about a year after Cindy Pollard, UM system vice president for strategic communication, left her job. Wolfe decided not to hire a replacement for Pollard.

*Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.*
University of Missouri employee payroll 2012-2013

This database has been updated for the 2012-2013 school year.

Taxpayers help pay the salaries for more than 24,000 employees in the University of Missouri System, which has campuses in Columbia, St. Louis, Kansas City and Rolla. Search this database to learn what university employees are being paid. The system noted on this year's report: "This year each campus established a unique salary increase process. In general, campuses expected to spend about 2% overall, but there are wide variations by campus, unit, and individual employees due to budget differences, market considerations and merit."

Select fields below to search through the University of Missouri System employee payroll.
MU ranks in top 10 for family medicine

MU was named a top-ranked school in family medicine by the American Academy of Family Physicians in early May for its higher-than-average number of residents who chose that field.

Ashley Bentley, student interest strategist for AAFP, said the organization selects the top 10 schools based on the percentage of graduating students who have chosen the family medicine track. AAFP releases the list to thank the schools as well as provide examples for medical schools trying to improve their family medicine programs.

"We highlight schools who are doing the best so that they can be recognized, and also so medical schools that are trying to graduate more family physicians can learn from what is working," Bentley said.

Family physicians are important to the country's health care because they a range of care, from preventive to chronic, and are able to treat a variety of illnesses, Bentley said.

"Family physicians are the only physicians who treat all organs, ailments, ages and genders, unlike other specialties," she said.

Of more than 400 residents at MU's medical school, at least 65 have chosen family medicine.

"Over the last three years, MU is among the medical schools graduating the highest percentage of physicians choosing family medicine as a specialty," said Steven Zweig, chairman of the Department of Family and Community Medicine. "We average about sixteen percent choosing family medicine, which is two times the rate of the average medical school."

Zweig said that even though MU is above average for the number of graduates specialized in family medicine, to keep up with demand about 30 percent of medical students would need to choose that as their field.

"There's also a value and joy in being part of a community," Zweig said. "As we build trust with our patients, they are also more likely to follow our recommendations."

Family physicians are especially important to rural areas, where medical help could sometimes be miles away. To address this, MU has set up a rural training track, which in turn has helped increase the number of medical school graduates specializing in family medicine.

This training track was one of the factors that led MU students to choose family medicine. Zweig said the department provides role models that are involved in training for all four years.
Can mold or any type of fungal spores germinate in cold weather, like in Antarctica?

By TAMRA REALL and DEANNA LANKFORD of MU’s Office of Science Outreach

Wednesday, June 5, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Question submitted by Ragan Webb’s fourth-grade class at Fairview Elementary School

Mycologist Jeanne Mihail, a professor in the Division of Plant Sciences at the University of Missouri, explains: "Around 1,000 to 1,500 described species grow in places with very cold temperatures, such as Antarctica." Although some fungi grow in extreme conditions and temperatures, most fungi have less-challenging growing conditions. Mihail notes, "The warmest temperatures can cause proteins to lose their form. Freezing temperatures cause ice crystal formation that can disrupt cell membranes and stop growth."

Fungi are different from plants and animals. Using photosynthesis, plants make food, while animals ingest food. Fungi, however, such as molds and mushrooms, are made up of root-like tubes or threads that secrete enzymes into the environment, pre-digesting their food before absorbing the nutrients. Mihail explains, "Fungi can be classified into three groups: decomposers, parasites and mutualists." Decomposers, or recyclers, are found nearly everywhere, even on bread or the cheese and strawberries in your refrigerator. In Antarctica, fungi will eat the remains of plants and animals on the ground, in the soil or even in the ice. While parasites can make plants or animals sick, mutualists help plants and other organisms grow and get nutrients.

Mushrooms are fun to find, but never eat wild-collected mushrooms or mushrooms from urban areas. At home, the mold found on bread or cheese is often a penicillin fungus, so you should be careful if you have a penicillin allergy. Mihail concludes, "Rather than be offended by the fungi in your refrigerator, realize they are important nutrient recyclers in our ecosystem. We depend on them, and they are a natural component of our environment."

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