Mizzou receiver Dorial Green-Beckham suspended for unspecified violation

April 7

BY TOD PALMER
The Kansas City Star

Missouri coach Gary Pinkel indefinitely suspended star wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham on Monday for an unspecified violation of team rules.

“It’s unfortunate, but it’s the right thing to do for our football program, for the athletic department, and also for Dorial,” Pinkel said in a news release.

Green-Beckham is part of an ongoing investigation by Columbia Police, according to Sgt. Joe Bernhard, but has not been arrested.
Bernhard would not comment further but said information about the investigation would be available later in the week.

For now, Green-Beckham — who had a team-best 59 catches for 883 yards with a team-high 12 touchdowns last season — is suspended from all team activities per university policy, but he will have access to the academic resource center.

“We have high standards related to the expectations that come along with being a Missouri Tiger, and Dorial has not met those recently,” Pinkel said. “Representing Mizzou and our fans is a privilege, and we’ll work with him during this process.

“It’s been disappointing to have this, and other issues which have taken place lately. It’s frustrating, because we work very hard to instill responsibility and discipline in our young men so that our program represents Mizzou the right way. These actions aren’t representative of those expectations, and we are addressing these issues head on.”

Green-Beckham also was arrested in October 2012 for misdemeanor possession of less than 35 grams of marijuana in a parking lot near Memorial Stadium. He and three other Missouri football players who also were in the car later pleaded guilty to second-degree trespassing.

Springfield Police public affairs officer Lisa Cox said the department still is awaiting results from the state lab in Green-Beckham’s January arrest for alleged possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute, a felony.

That case is pending, although another passenger in the car admitted ownership of the marijuana in that case.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/04/07/4943558/mizzou-receiver-dorial-greenbeckham.html#storylink=cpy
UPDATE: Missouri wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham suspended indefinitely

Monday, April 7, 2014 | 9:53 p.m. CDT; updated 10:04 p.m. CDT, Monday, April 7, 2014
BY MATTHEW FAIRBURN, MEGAN ARMSTRONG

COLUMBIA — Missouri wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham has been suspended indefinitely for a violation of team policies. The suspension was a joint decision by Missouri head football coach Gary Pinkel and athletics director Mike Alden.

"It's unfortunate, but it's the right thing to do for our football program, for the athletic department, and also for Dorial," Pinkel said in a news release. "We have high standards related to the expectations that come along with being a Missouri Tiger, and Dorial has not met those recently."

Missouri athletics officials have not confirmed the specific reason for Green-Beckham's latest suspension, other than to say he violated team policies.

Columbia Police sergeant Joe Bernhard said Monday morning that Green-Beckham was not arrested over the weekend, but according to residents at Brookside Townhomes, Green-Beckham was involved in an incident there sometime between 2 and 3 a.m. Sunday.

The Kansas City Star reported later Monday that "Green-Beckham is part of an ongoing investigation by Columbia Police, according to Sgt. Joe Bernhard, but has not been arrested."

The only incident from Brookside Townhomes reported to the Columbia police within this time period is a burglary at 2:36 a.m. Sunday.

Missouri sophomore and Brookside resident Chris Connor said he heard shouting from the apartment unit next to his.

Connor's roommate Mike Henke said he saw a white Dodge Charger speed away and a girl hitting it as it drove away.
“After (Green-Beckham) drove away, his teammates were yelling at us to not call the cops,” Connor said. “They were like, 'Dude, come on. Just don’t call the cops.'"

The people outside the apartment did call the police, and police arrived to the scene 15 minutes later, Connor said.

Green-Beckham, the former No. 1 recruit in the nation, led Missouri with 59 receptions and 12 touchdowns as a sophomore last season. He scored a school single-game record four touchdowns against Kentucky.

This is the second time Green-Beckham has been suspended in his career. He was suspended for one game in 2012 during his freshman season after being arrested on suspicion of marijuana possession. The charges were later dropped.

Green-Beckham had another marijuana-related arrest in January, just slightly more than a week after Missouri beat Oklahoma State in the Cotton Bowl. Green-Beckham was arrested Jan. 10 when he and two other men were stopped for a traffic violation in Springfield, Green-Beckham's hometown. The police officer noticed the odor of marijuana and found approximately one pound of marijuana in the car, the police report said. All three men were released without bail.

Green-Beckham has not been made available for interviews throughout spring practice at the request of his family while his legal situation is being sorted out.

"It's been disappointing to have this and other issues which have taken place lately," Pinkel said. "It's frustrating because we work very hard to instill responsibility and discipline in our young men, so that our program represents Mizzou the right way. These actions aren’t representative of those expectations, and we are addressing these issues head-on."

Green-Beckham's suspension includes all team practices and activities, but he will have access to the academic support center during his suspension, according to the release.
Too much Twitter leads to infidelity and divorce, study shows

Humanity's new, Web-based sharing essence is, at heart, divisive.

We've seen so often that what occurs on the Web is misconstrued, spills over into real life, and causes painful friction.

Just a few weeks ago, it was revealed that too much Facebook can make you unfaithful. We have, after all, abdicated our real responsibilities in favor of our virtual world. We are mere weak vessels being buffeted by our inner chemicals and fears.

Perhaps it all started when a woman sued a man for ending their Facebook relationship.

We're never going to learn, though. So this latest piece of information seems but a formality: Twitter has been linked with infidelity and divorce.

You see, "Human Beings Linked With Infidelity And Divorce" just isn't so enticing.

Instead, I must tell you about a study at the University of Missouri that reveals that "active Twitter users are far more likely to experience Twitter-related conflict with their romantic partners." This conflict apparently leads to infidelity and even divorce.

Is it that people see a different side of their twittering lovers? Is it that they find they cannot patrol their lover's activities enough, with a tweet, a retweet, or a favoriting taking a mere second?

Russell Clayton, a doctoral student in the University of Missouri School of Journalism, has already concluded that the more people use Facebook, the more likely they are to drift into relationship mayhem, especially if the relationship is less than 36 months old.
Here, though, the source of love gone astray is absolute. Clayton said: "I found it interesting that active Twitter users experienced Twitter-related conflict and negative relationship outcomes regardless of length of romantic relationship."

His study, named "The Third Wheel: The Impact of Twitter Use on Relationship Infidelity and Divorce," makes for difficult reading.

Clayton's 571 subjects ranged in age from 18 to 67, so one can't toss this toward the naivete and hormonal imbalance of youth.

Perhaps it's the newsiness of Twitter that stuns lovers into poor judgment. Perhaps its very immediacy leads to a lack of aforethought and an ignorance of potential consequences.

There again, it could be that people are naturally thoughtless and social media gives them more outlets to propagate their own base impulses at the expense of others.

You'll be stunned to hear that Clayton offers his own remedies: "Users should cut back to moderate, healthy levels of Twitter use if they are experiencing Twitter or Facebook-related conflict. Some couples share joint social networking site accounts to reduce relationship conflict, and there are some social networking site apps, such as the 2Life app, that facilitate interpersonal communication between partners."

Just as you need to cut back on Facebook and Twitter to save your relationship, you need an app to help your relationship grow.

Doing it yourself, without technological help, is so very last century.

New study shows that excessive Twitter use has led to cheating and been the cause for breakups

- A University of Missouri study shows that Twitter usage can lead people to cheat and cause problems in relationships offline
- The study featured interviews with 581 active Twitter users
• Found similar effects to that of Facebook, where exes can keep track of one another which prolongs the breakup process

A new study has shown a link between Twitter usage and the number of relationships plagued by social media-related fights.

More than 500 active Twitter users were surveyed and the results showed that the more time an individual spent on the social networking site, the more problems ensued in their relationships.

'Although a number of variables can contribute to relationship infidelity and separation, social networking site usage, such as Twitter and Facebook use, can be damaging to relationships,' the report's author Russell Clayton said.

Mr. Clayton, a doctoral student at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, previously studied the effect that Facebook had on relationships and now his examination into Twitter proves that the newer micro-blogging platform is creating a similar level of jealousy that he found for Facebook.

'Facebook-induced jealousy, partner surveillance, posting ambiguous information, compulsive Internet use, and online portrayal of intimate relationships can be damaging to romantic relationships,' he wrote in the study, released Sunday.

'Since Twitter now allows users to interact in a similar way as Facebook (i.e., write posts and upload images, videos, and location check-ins), the researcher theorizes that the effects of Twitter use on interpersonal relationships are comparable to those associated with Facebook.'

For Facebook, he found that if partners stayed 'friends' on the social network, that would delay the healing process because they would go back and look through their ex's activity and photos.
In the new study, called ‘The Third Wheel’, Mr Clayton went on to extrapolate that, as a result of the interview with 581 Twitter users, reports of Twitter-related conflict within couples 'significantly predicted' negative outcomes that included cheating and break ups.

'I found it interesting that active Twitter users experienced Twitter-related conflict and negative relationship outcomes regardless of length of romantic relationship,' Clayton said.

'Couples who reported being in relatively new relationships experienced the same amount of conflict as those in longer relationships.'

One solution that they suggest is to limit the individual's time on Twitter if they begin to notice the outbreak of Twitter-related disagreements.

Another option is to take the secrecy out of the equation by having joint accounts that both partners use and have easy access to.

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Loftin joins tiger territory

By Al Germond

The early reports about Dr. Richard Bowen Loftin, the incoming 22nd chancellor of the University of Missouri, have been good. Sixty-four-year-old Loftin comes to us from Texas A&M University. With 50,000 students and branch campuses, A&M has an overwhelming presence in
Brazos County and the twin cities of Bryan-College Station, with a metro area population of 231,623 situated about 80 miles northwest of Houston. Sporting sartorially distinctive cravats, Loftin has plunged into his new administrative role responding to an array of challenges with the first responder, on-the-scene zeal of a fireman. He was immensely popular especially with students across Aggieland, and press accounts cite tensions during his tenure as A&M president with the board of regents and Gov. Rick Perry, including a vetoed tuition increase while state support continued to decline.

We scratch and claw our way wanting to know more about Texas A&M. A few glimpses come via the Internet and from Irwin A. Tang’s *The Texas Aggie Bonfire*, which describes the fiery extravaganza tied to the Aggie-Longhorn (University of Texas) rivalry that went terribly wrong on Nov. 18, 1999, when 12 students died. That’s really the only bad news. The good news is that like MU, TAMU as it is known locally participates in the prestigious 59-member Association of American Universities, joined the SEC the same time MU did more than a year ago, funds an ambitious $700 million research program and two business incentive programs: Start Up Aggieland and the Aggie Angel Network. A university with somewhat rough origins is laced with traditions, including its distinctive Corps of Cadets. As an academic business, our curiosity is especially directed at relationships between TAMU and the governments of Brazos County and the cities of Bryan and College Station and how they work together smoothly and cooperatively.

**The MU connection**

Loftin has moved to a region that’s been marked over the years by varying levels of enthusiasm and support for MU. I’ve often wondered about the depth and sincerity of relationships between university officials and their governing counterparts in city and county government. To an outsider, these relationships often appear to be little more than acknowledging one another’s presence sprinkled with cat fights over picayune issues and scant evidence that there’s much in the way of outreach on either side of Elm Street. It seems a reminder is in order for those who govern to restate that Columbia is a company town tied closely to MU, sprung to its present significance as a seat of learning and regional center because the seeds of this land grant university were fortuitously planted here 175 years ago.

University officials unabashedly promote increasing Columbia’s campus
enrollment to 40,000 students. This, in turn, has spurred investments to house the anticipated addition of thousands of new students over the 35,000 already studying here. Some of us remain skeptical and recall enrollment declines 30 years ago and academic cutbacks when Peter Magrath was president and Barbara Uehling was campus chancellor. We remember proposed curriculum enhancements such as “Food for the 21st Century” and the cutbacks and program consolidations when 1985 enrollment was slightly less than 22,000. Yet, there are infrastructure issues, and it is embarrassing how both sides have recently stumbled over what will be a win-win for all of us.

**An enthusiastic approach**

There’s skepticism about the amplitude of rah-rah for Old Mizzou that emanates these days from the precincts of city and county government. Readings on the applause meter from the north-of-Elm-Street governing crowd have been rather weak it seems. The needle pressed more positively during a recent interview in which Loftin distinguished himself with enthusiastic, straightforward talk about the challenges he faces as chancellor. He affirmed his desire to reach out and immerse himself in working with local elected officials to get things done. Will they share his ebullient enthusiasm? We certainly hope so.

Maybe we can learn from Loftin’s experience working on transit issues that could be worth emulating here. Loftin should continue greeting people with “howdy” and challenging teams to “gig ’em” when competition gets tough. His attitude is infectious, and we will have much to gain from it. This bronco rider is now in our corral — and the ride promises to be very interesting.
Mo. Senate panel backs 5 percent college increase

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri’s public universities and community colleges could get a 5 percent funding increase under a budget plan embraced by a Senate committee.

The plan approved Monday by the Senate Appropriations Committee would provide a more than $43 million funding increase to higher education institutions.

Gov. Jay Nixon had proposed increases of 5 percent for universities and 4 percent increase for community colleges.

The House had approved a 3 percent increase for higher education institutions. Part of that would have been dependent on state revenues exceeding legislative projections and instead meeting Nixon’s more optimistic forecast.

All of the proposals would distribute the increased funding based on whether institutions meet performance criteria.

The House and Senate must settle their budget differences by early May.

Mo. Senate passes bonding proposal projects

By Alex Stuckey astuckey@post-dispatch.com 573-556-6186

JEFFERSON CITY • The Missouri Senate today passed a resolution outlining the about 300 deferred maintenance projects that would benefit from a $600 million bonding proposal.
One of these projects is the $200 million maximum security facility at Fulton State Hospital.

The resolution received a vote of 26-4. Last week, Senate passed the bonding proposal -- allowing the state to raise the cap on its ability to sell bonds by $600 million -- associated with this resolution. Both were sponsored by Sen. Mike Parson, R-Bolivar.

Sen. John Lamping, R-Ladue, again raised concerns about increasing the state's debt ceiling to pay for these projects. He would rather appropriate for these projects in the budget process.

However, Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said it would be impossible to catch up on deferred maintenance projects through the budget appropriation process.

"We're so far behind the curve," Schaefer said.

The measure includes more than $48 million for repairs at the Missouri Capitol and $2 million in repairs at the Governor's mansion. Both the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University of Missouri-St. Louis have more than 15 projects on the list.

The Fulton project is the only new-build project included in this proposal. The new facility would feature a 300-bed, high-security complex expected to cost a total of $211 million. Over a 10-year period, the facility rebuild is expected to save and defer costs totaling $188 million. In a best-case scenario, the new hospital would open in late 2016.

Another proposal to fund the Fulton facility is currently making its way through the legislative process. The funding proposal, created by Rep. Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, would involve five years of bonds. Initially, Stream said the state would pay about $46 million each year, but that dropped to $44 million for the fiscal year beginning July 1 because the interest rate on the bonds decreased to 3 percent from 5 percent. The House Budget Committee passed the bill Wednesday.

Parson's bill was sent to the House. The resolution follows.

The bill is SB 723. The resolution is SCR 39.

Senate committee adds funding for State Historical Society building

By Rudi Keller

Monday, April 7, 2014 at 6:47 pm
JEFFERSON CITY — The State Historical Society of Missouri would receive $33 million to build the four-story museum and research center envisioned as a replacement to its existing quarters in the basement of Ellis Library, the Senate Appropriations Committee decided Monday.

The money will show the Senate’s commitment to the project as lawmakers debate spending for the coming fiscal year, Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said.

“I think it is time to stake out that it is time to build that facility,” Schaefer told reporters after the committee met.

The committee worked through four spending bills Monday afternoon covering state debt, education, revenue and transportation. During the session, Schaefer and the committee added to the House-passed proposals for state colleges and universities and cut more than $30 million from various programs operated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**The University of Missouri would receive an additional $21.3 million, its share of a 5 percent base funding increase for colleges and universities and equal to the amount proposed by Gov. Jay Nixon.** The Senate committee, like the House, left out Nixon’s proposals for science, technology, engineering and math education and his proposed funding to train mental health professionals.

The House approved a 2 percent overall increase for colleges and universities, with an additional 1 percent set aside if growth meets higher expectations included Nixon’s budget plan.

The historical society has been working for several years on a plan for its new building. Director Gary Kremer said that a consultant’s report puts the total cost at more than $37 million. The building would help it preserve its collections and put more of it on display.

“We can display less than one-half of 1 percent of our collection now because of space issues,” Kremer said.

The historical society’s Board of Trustees has identified the downtown block bounded by Sixth, Seventh, Elm and Locust streets, now the site of a parking lot and the University of Missouri’s HeinkelBuilding.

Schaefer’s move to include the building project in the operating budget for higher education is unusual. Lawmakers generally consider construction spending in a separate bill. If lawmakers can work out a list of projects to build in the coming year, the money could be shifted to a different bill, he said.

“They need to have the new building,” Schaefer said. “The question is how to fund it.”
UPDATE: Missouri Senate panel backs more money for colleges

Monday, April 7, 2014 | 7:02 p.m. CDT; updated 7:45 p.m. CDT, Monday, April 7, 2014
BY DAVID A. LIEB/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

*UPDATE: This story has been updated from the Senate Appropriations Committee meeting.

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri's public colleges and universities could be assured a 5 percent funding increase under a budget plan embraced Tuesday by a Senate panel that sets different education priorities than one passed by the House.

While allotting a larger increase to higher education institutions, the Senate's proposed spending plan for the 2015 budget year includes a smaller increase in Missouri's main college scholarship program than proposed by the House. The Senate Appropriations Committee also made numerous other changes, one of the largest additions being $33 million for a new building for The State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia.

Senators stuck with the House's two-pronged funding approach for K-12 public schools, which sets one level of funding based on legislative revenue projections and a second, higher amount if revenues meet Gov. Jay Nixon's more optimistic forecasts. But the Senate's plan would provide a slightly smaller minimum increase than the House version.

The Republican-led legislature is considering a roughly $26 billion budget for the next fiscal year. The House plan passed last month left out some of the Democratic governor's recommendations, most notably to spend about $2 billion in federal funds to expand Medicaid coverage for low-income adults.

The changes made Monday still must go before the full Senate. Negotiators from the two chambers then will have until May 9 to work out their differences and send a final version to Nixon.
Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer said his plan places a greater emphasis on higher education institutions because their state funding has yet to rebound to the amounts budgeted in 2008, before a recession led to state funding cuts.

The Senate's plan would provide a 5 percent increase — totaling more than $43 million — to public universities and community colleges, with the money to be divvied up based on whether institutions met performance goals.

Nixon had proposed a 5 percent performance increase for universities but a 4 percent increase for community colleges. The House had approved a 3 percent performance increase for both colleges and universities, part of which was dependent upon revenues meeting Nixon's higher projections.

The Senate panel also reduced the funding increase for Missouri's main college scholarship program to $8.6 million, as recommended by Nixon, instead of the House's $20.1 million increase.

The House budget plan contained nothing for the new Historical Society building near MU.

Schaefer, a Republican from Columbia, said the long-planned building is an important improvement.

"It's time to build that facility and to make sure that the priceless collections that we've got — that right now are in the basement of the university library — don't succumb to water damage or anything else, and that they're available for the public to enjoy," he said.

Historical Society Executive Director Gary Kremer said the planned 100,000-square-foot building would nearly triple the space of the current facility, which is plagued by water leaks.

House Budget Committee Chairman Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, said he supports a new building, but "the question is how do we fund it, where does the money come from and where does it fit in the priority list?"

The House budget plan would provide K-12 public schools with a $122 million increase to the nearly $3.1 billion of basic school aid if revenues meet legislative expectations. If
revenues grow by Nixon's more optimistic forecast, schools could get a $278 million increase under the House plan.

The Senate panel retained that maximum figure but set the minimum school funding increase at $115 million.

The Senate committee also cut several other funding increases approved by the House, including dropping an increase for school transportation costs by $10 million to $15 million — the amount originally recommended by Nixon.

Nixon had sought a $20 million increase for a Missouri preschool program. The House approved an $8.2 million increase. The Senate panel endorsed a $3.1 million increase.

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**Missouri students need access to achieve success**

By Karissa Anderson, Karina Arango, JaMya Short and Sadie Weiss

NO MU MENTION

The Missouri House of Representatives is to be applauded for passing a $20 million increase for the Access Missouri need-based grant program. The Senate must now do its part to show support for Access Missouri and keep this $20 million increase in Missouri’s FY2015 budget.

Access Missouri is a grant program that supports students with financial need attending a college or university in the state of Missouri. It supports approximately 50,000 students each year, which is significantly more than any other scholarship program in the state. Without this program, many Missouri students would simply not be able to continue their education after high school. Students in Missouri should have the opportunity to attend college in their home state, and if Missouri wants to keep talented and skilled employees in state, then it desperately needs to increase funding for Access Missouri.

At The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis, those of us who have directly benefited from need-based scholarship funding know firsthand the importance of this type of financial aid. As interns we are currently conducting research on higher education policy in Missouri. We ourselves could not have successfully completed our higher education without financial assistance, and we are all committed to, and feel passionate about, supporting need-based programs for Missouri students.

One colleague is currently a junior at Fontbonne University studying communications and is receiving an Access Missouri award as part of her financial aid package. Another one of us graduated from Southeast Missouri State and also received Access Missouri awards, which were critical to her degree completion.
An analysis of state scholarship programs found that Access Missouri recipients have a stronger persistence rate than Missouri students overall. Access Missouri recipients don’t just attend college, they earn degrees.

Individual students are not the only ones who will benefit from an increase in Access Missouri funding. Our entire state will benefit if we choose to invest in students with financial need. On virtually every measure of economic well-being, college graduates are doing better than those with just a high school diploma. Students with a bachelor’s degree have higher lifetime earnings and are more involved in their communities. We believe that the economy and our communities will be stronger if Missouri gives students with financial need equal opportunity to contribute to our state.

Support of the $20 million increase in Access Missouri is critical for the future of higher education in Missouri. This increase would get funding close to a level Missouri students haven’t seen since 2009. The amount is still short of that level of funding, but $20 million is a step in the right direction for Missouri students. If we want our state to be on the path to a stronger economy, let’s invest in all of our students, because they all have the potential and deserve the opportunity to be strong, influential members of our communities and our state.

Duke admissions director highlights need for minorities in medicine

Monday, April 7, 2014 | 10:47 p.m. CDT; updated 6:26 a.m. CDT, Tuesday, April 8, 2014
BY MADISON FELLER

COLUMBIA — Before Brenda Armstrong became director of admissions at Duke University Medical Center, she sat in as university officials reviewed admissions applications.

She was taken aback when someone mentioned an applicant had attended a "colored school."

She said, "What's a colored school? A red school? A blue school?"

Armstrong, who said she attended a "colored school" herself, was offended not only by the comment but also by what it represented: the lack of diversity in medical education.

Armstrong's Monday lecture, titled "The Urgency for Diversity in Medical Education: Time to Put Up or Shut Up," comes as the MU School of
Medicine is stepping up its efforts to promote diversity. It still lags behind other Midwestern schools of similar size.

The Medical School’s numbers of African-American students has typically been low, with rarely more than a handful admitted each year. But the number for 2007's incoming class was especially dire: zero.

That led the Association of American Medical Colleges, which oversees the country's medical schools, to criticize MU in its 2008 accreditation report.

Since then, the school has hired a diversity coordinator, and its numbers of minorities rebounded in 2008 with six African-Americans included in that incoming class.

The advancements have stalled, however, with the 2013 incoming class including only four African-Americans, or 4.2 percent of 96 total students — a small fraction compared to Missouri’s 11.7 percent African-American population.

Although the Medical School has lagged behind other schools in admitting students who are African-American, its incoming summer class will be "the most diverse class ever," Les Hall, interim dean, said.

The numbers are preliminary, he said, but 24 of the 96 medical students who have committed to MU are minorities and nine are under-represented minorities.

Medical schools' demographics could impact public health, according to experts who say doctors are more effective at treating patients from similar backgrounds.

But it's not easy to change an institution, Armstrong said.

"It takes time to change," she said. "It takes an understanding that this work is everybody's work."

Robert Churchill, former dean of the MU School of Medicine, will deliver a lecture titled "Diversity in Medicine" at noon Tuesday in Room S-110 in Memorial Union.
Panel Urges Low-Dose Aspirin to Reduce Pre-eclampsia Risk

By Catherin Saint Louis

April 7, 2014, 5:24 pm

Pregnant women should take low-dose aspirin daily to reduce their chance of developing pre-eclampsia if they are at high risk for the life-threatening disorder, an influential government panel said on Monday.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force’s draft recommendation follows a growing scientific consensus that low doses may be beneficial to some high-risk women and their offspring. Low-dose aspirin reduced the risk of pre-eclampsia by 24 percent in clinical trials, according to a systematic review underpinning the new recommendation, which was published in Annals of Internal Medicine.

Low-dose aspirin also reduced the risk of premature birth by 14 percent and of intrauterine growth restriction — a condition in which the fetus doesn’t grow as fast as expected — by 20 percent.

“For every four women who would have gotten pre-eclampsia, one case is prevented,” said Dr. Ira M. Bernstein, the chair of department of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences at the University of Vermont. “The ability to prevent a quarter of disease is substantial.”

Pre-eclampsia is a condition usually occurring in the second half of pregnancy and characterized by high blood pressure, protein in the urine, liver disease and blood-clotting abnormalities.

It is a leading complication for expectant mothers and their infants, affecting roughly 4 percent of pregnancies nationwide. The only “cure” is delivery. When a pregnant women develops pre-eclampsia in the second trimester, her infant often must be delivered prematurely to avoid severe maternal complications, like stroke.

The task force recommended that women at high risk for pre-eclampsia take 81 milligrams of low-dose aspirin daily after 12 weeks of gestation. High-risk women include those who have had pre-eclampsia in a prior pregnancy, especially those who have had to deliver preterm; women carrying multiple fetuses; and women who had diabetes or high blood pressure at conception.
But the task force also advised that expectant women with multiple moderate-risk factors “may also benefit from low-dose aspirin.” These risks include obesity, a family history of pre-eclampsia, women older than 35, and African-American women.

A single high-risk factor merits low-dose aspirin use, but “it’s a judgment call between physicians and patients as to whether a combination of moderate-risk factors is enough to justify taking low-dose aspirin,” said Dr. Michael L. LeFevre, the chair of the task force and a professor of family medicine at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Low-dose aspirin appears to cause no short-term harm during pregnancy, according to the new review of 19 clinical trials and two observational studies. However, potential rare or long-term harms could not be ruled out.

The largest trial followed infants 18 months after birth, and “found no differences in development outcomes,” said Jillian T. Henderson, the lead author of the review and an investigator at Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, Ore.

The researchers also found that use of low-dose aspirin doesn’t increase the risk of excessive bleeding after delivery, placental abruption (when the placenta detaches from the uterus before it should) or bleeding inside the baby’s cranial vault.

Dr. Phyllis August, a professor of medicine in obstetrics and gynecology at Weill Cornell Medical College, praised the careful appraisal of the potential risks of taking aspirin. “They critically reviewed the risks, and well,” said Dr. August, who for 20 years has had selected high-risk patients use low-dose aspirin.

In recent months, medical organizations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Heart Association also have advised that high-risk women use low-dose aspirin, with slight variations in who qualifies.

Still, “our general impression is it’s being used infrequently,” said Dr. LeFevre.

It’s not currently possible to predict which women will develop pre-eclampsia or its complications. Some women classified as low risk still get the syndrome out of the blue. Effective prevention of pre-eclampsia has been difficult to pinpoint, experts said, but a remedy that could prevent a quarter of the cases is a significant step forward.

“We’d like to be able to prevent four out of four cases, obviously,” Dr. Bernstein said. “There’s still a lot to learn about why the other three are still getting it, and how to prevent their disease.”
Genocide survivor to share his reflections on Rwanda 20 years later

Monday, April 7, 2014 | 1:14 p.m. CDT; updated 4:13 p.m. CDT, Monday, April 7, 2014
BY ADITI SHRIKANT

COLUMBIA — A survivor of the Rwandan genocide will be sharing his experience Friday evening at MU.

The talk, "Healing: Rwanda 20 Years Later," will commemorate the Rwandans who were killed in the 1994 genocide. Emmanuel Habimana, a filmmaker, public speaker and activist from Kigali, Rwanda, will share his story. Habimana was orphaned during the genocide, and he began his work as a youth activist in Kigali, where he and his peers assisted other orphans in the genocide.

Habimana began working on a documentary called "Komora: To Heal" in 2010 about orphan survivors. He came to the U.S. to work on the film and share his experiences during the genocide on nationwide speaking tours. Friday's talk will focus on Rwanda's achievements in healing 20 years after the genocide.

The event begins at 5 p.m. Friday at MU's Memorial Student Union. It is free and open to the public.

It is being sponsored by Step Up! American Association for Rwandan Women, The MU Afro-Romance Institute, the MU black studies department and the MU sociology department.