MU Chancellor Loftin looks to tradition and future at inauguration

By ASHLEY JOST

Thursday, September 18, 2014 at 6:53 pm Comments (5)

In an old ceremony full of pomp and circumstance, administrators from the University of Missouri inaugurated Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin on Thursday afternoon.

But nuances were added to Loftin’s celebration, meant to show that new traditions are on the horizon.

Standing on the Missouri Theatre stage, Loftin told a crowd of hundreds of students, staff, faculty, administrators, community leaders and even a showing from his former employer and alma mater, Texas A&M University, about his journey to the present day.
After receiving the insignia of office, a Jefferson medallion first presented to former Chancellor Brady Deaton in 2004, Loftin took the podium — a lectern that Mark Twain spoke at during a visit to MU — to talk about his story and his hopes for the university. But next to him was a new tradition: a mace designed and crafted by people at the university.

The mace is made from a floorboard of Switzler Hall, the oldest classroom building on campus, with additional parts crafted with a 3D printer at the MU College of Engineering. The mace holds four brass medallions etched with insignia representative of the university showing Thomas Jefferson’s face, MU’s original academic seal, The Columns and Memorial Union.

In thanking his employees and supporters, Loftin provided an assignment to the crowd, encouraging forward thinking. Loftin announced his intention to create a strategic plan that reaches past the year-long documents the UM System mandates. He wants a 25-year plan. Getting to the 175th anniversary of the university means planning for 200, in Loftin’s eyes.

Loftin said an advisory committee of faculty, staff and students will be formed to address what should be in a 25-year plan. By April 2015, he hopes to present an agreed-upon collection of those thoughts to the Board of Curators.

Change has been a staple of Loftin’s leadership since his arrival in February. Many of the changes are based on needs he has observed or heard from the campus community, like creating chief financial and chief executive officers and taking the first steps of reinventing the way the university’s graduate school programs operate. He’s made changes to increase the university’s research standing, including the hiring of a new medical school dean, Patrick Delafontaine. And he’s taken steps to address campus sexual assault by creating an office focused solely on Title IX issues and training.

Loftin’s first eight months were not easy.

The apparent need to create a Title IX Office came after an alleged sexual assault of a former MU swimmer, Sasha Menu Courey, that preceded Loftin’s time by years came to light in March. The UM System, under President Tim Wolfe, began to implement resources addressing campus sexual assault and mental health issues. Loftin took on some of that responsibility of his own in the Title IX Office.

Three weeks after arriving at MU, part of a walkway collapsed at a university-owned apartment complex, killing a Columbia firefighter.
Loftin stood at the vigils in Lt. Bruce Britt’s honor, hired engineers to inspect all MU-owned properties and later made the decision to shut down and demolish the apartment complex where Britt was killed.

“Like all universities we have a few challenges … don’t we?” UM System President Tim Wolfe said in his introductory remarks. Wolfe expressed his gratitude for Loftin’s taking each event in stride “with careful composure” and “stellar guidance.”

Wolfe said that this time last year he stood in front of audiences of all kinds promising that he would use their input of what they wanted in a chancellor to appoint MU’s new leader.

“I feel like we were successful and then some,” Wolfe said. “What a leader we have found in Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.”

The ceremony topped off a week of celebratory events and symposia in honor of Loftin’s official installation and the celebration of MU’s 175th anniversary.

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Chancellor speaks of past, future MU excellence at inauguration
COLUMBIA — Wearing a Jefferson medallion to signify his academic office, R. Bowen Loftin was inaugurated Thursday as the 22nd chancellor and chief executive officer of MU.

"I'm at home," Loftin told the crowd of nearly 1,000 faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters at the Missouri Theatre. "I'm at home in higher education."

The ceremony was part of a week-long celebration of the 175th anniversary of the university, founded in 1839 as the first public institution of higher education west of the Mississippi River.

Loftin's inauguration began at 3 p.m. with a procession of nearly 300 MU faculty members clad in academic regalia, who walked together from the Reynolds Alumni Center to the Missouri Theatre.

While the procession moved into the theater, the crowd that had already gathered rose to welcome the chancellor and his platform party as they made their way onto the stage.

The stage setting was simple — six white columns in front of a black curtain—symbolizing the university’s past and present. Standing at a lectern once used by Mark Twain, Loftin referenced the history of the university and the legacy he follows.

"The university has been here for a while. Extraordinary people have been here, great things have happened here," he said.

Loftin also shared stories about his background and childhood with the audience. He described his father as a very intelligent but uneducated man who longed for his son to go to college.

Loftin ultimately received a full scholarship to Texas A&M University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in physics. He also has master's and doctoral degrees in physics from Rice University.

The chancellor also talked about his father's gift with people — he could form a relationship with anyone, Loftin said.

"Relationships are the currency of life," his father told him, a philosophy that has informed his daily interactions with the MU community.
He said his decision to come to MU as chancellor was shaped, in part by an observation at an MU football game against Texas A&M.

He said he noticed that the student section was near the 50-yard line, despite the fact that MU could sell the tickets at a higher price to fans and alumni.

"That impressed me," he said. "It sends a message about where students sit in the priorities of the institution. That was a signal to me that (MU) is a good fit."

After he joined the university family, Loftin said he identified personally with the core values — discovery, excellence, responsibility and respect. In particular, Loftin emphasized how determined MU students are to succeed.

"Excellence is not perfection," he said. "It's giving it everything you've got. I see that here every single day."

Loftin concluded by saying he is committed to defining a future for MU.

"I am perfectly confident that Mizzou will become, in 25 years and beyond, the standard," he said.

"We will be the one that others seek to emulate."

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin is officially inaugurated

By JASMINE LEE • 13 HOURS AGO
The University of Missouri celebrated the inauguration of the chancellor tonight at the Missouri Theatre. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin is MU’s 22nd chancellor. The ceremony included a procession that began at the Reynolds Alumni Center and concluded at the Missouri Theatre.

Interim Provost Kenneth D. Dean welcomed the crowd of students, faculty and alumni. The Curators Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus William Bondeson recited the invocation.

Students Brandon Browning and Jenna Braaksma performed "Shannon's Aria" an opera performance from the Corps of Discovery. The MU Wind Ensemble Brass performed the proclamation composed by Professor Emeritus John Cheetham. UM system President Timothy M. Wolfe and MU Board of Curators Chairman Don M. Downing formally instated Chancellor Loftin by presenting him with the Jefferson medallion, the insignia of office. The medallion is a gift from the Jefferson Club Trustees that is worn by the MU chancellor on formal of occasions.
In his address, the chancellor talked about his beginning in Texas A&M as a student. He was impacted by the help he received from the university to attend college. He was the first in his family to attend college. During his years at College Station, he decided to pursue a career in teaching.

It is his third time being chancellor of an institution. He has been at 7 different universities since receiving his PhD, marking 40 years of working in higher education.

"I came committed to be the Chancellor during my visit in November of 2013, although many people didn't know" said Loftin. "Something stood out to me. When I saw the east side of Faurot Field dedicated to the student section that sent a message of where the students sat in the institution. That, my friends, is special."

He also announced he will be creating a steering committee made up of students, faculty and staff to define what MU will be for the future.

Interim Provost Kenneth D. Dean delivered the closing remarks and Nollie G. Moore led the crowd in the singing of the Alma Mater. After the ceremonial program, a reception was held in Stotler Lounge in Memorial Union.

**the maneater**

**Loftin inaugurated, discusses MU’s longevity**

Loftin announced he will create the “Looking Forward to 200 Committee” to improve MU’s long-term planning.

By **Jessica Karins**

Sept. 18, 2014

School spirit was stronger than ever when MU inaugurated R. Bowen Loftin as chancellor Thursday.
MU students, faculty and distinguished alumni, as well as guests from institutions like Harvard, Princeton and Duke accompanied Loftin in a processional from the Reynolds Alumni Center to the Missouri Theatre, where an installment ceremony took place.

Many wore ceremonial robes, military uniforms and mementos from a similar event on MU’s 150th anniversary 25 years ago.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said about 750 people were in attendance.

The former Texas A&M University president has been serving as MU’s chancellor since Feb. 1, but his formal inauguration was planned to coincide with this historical milestone for the university. He is the 22nd person to serve in this position.

During his speech, Loftin said he believes the administration could improve its long-term planning, so that the university could continue to grow and improve for many more years.

To accomplish this goal, Loftin announced he will create the “Looking Forward to 200 Committee”, which he said will develop long-term plans for the next 25 years.

The committee will have several goals: creating better access for low-income students, improving education and leadership programs, creating a better environment for scientific research, and advancing the current positive associations of what Loftin calls “the Mizzou brand”.

Loftin also discussed his reason for coming to MU and what he envisioned for the university’s future.

Loftin said he found a minor but significant detail during his visit to MU during a Texas A&M-Mizzou football game. In his experience, Loftin said, most schools squeezed into poor seats at games to make more money.

“Here, they had 50-yard-line seats,” he said, referring to the east side of stadium seating reserved for students. “That, my friends, is something special.”

Loftin said that experience told him a lot about how MU prioritizes students’ experiences.
He said when he meets students for the first time, he asks if they are happy at MU.

“So far everyone’s told me the same thing: yes.”

UM System President Tim Wolfe presented Loftin with the Jefferson Medallion, which he said signifies “the power and obligations of the office.” Loftin will wear the medallion at all formal MU events.

Wolfe said that during the search process for a new chancellor, the members of the committee wanted “a leader who would truly fit the university’s elite status.”

“I feel our search was successful and then some,” he said.

Other events took place throughout the week to celebrate the inauguration and MU’s 175th year, including a series of symposia lectures that focused on the future of higher education.

Among the guest speakers were Jon Meacham, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “American Lion” and executive editor at Random House, Chancellor Emeritus Richard Wallace and MU President Emeritus Mel George.

MU also received a marble slab from the Smithsonian Institute on which Thomas Jefferson wrote his own epitaph. According to an MU news release, the piece will eventually be showcased in Jesse Hall, which is currently undergoing renovations.

The celebration will conclude with a ceremonial illumination of the Columns on Friday night.

Basi said the events cost an estimated $43,000, but nearly 99 percent of the funds were transferred between various university departments in exchange for goods and services.

“This is a unique opportunity to raise the profile of the university among our peers,” he said.

Loftin closed the ceremony by reminding the audience that although MU should take guidance from other universities, it should define its own path rather than imitating theirs precisely.
“I am perfectly confident that Mizzou will become, in 25 years and beyond, the standard,” he said.

Mizzou Arena getting upgrades after 10 years

By STEVE WALENTIK

Thursday, September 18, 2014 at 8:39 pm Comments (1)

Missouri basketball fans will be greeted by the sight of a new video board hanging over the center of Norm Stewart Court when they make their way to Mizzou Arena later this fall.

It is the centerpiece of a planned multi-million-dollar renovation project that the MU athletic department is undertaking on the 10-year-old arena. Athletic Director Mike Alden spoke about the project in a gathering with reporters earlier this month, but a formal announcement came Thursday.

The renovations will also include upgrades to the facility entryway with displays highlighting the tradition of the program and upgrades to the player development area, team lounge, locker room and academic area as well as the weight room.

The project was kick-started by a $1.5 million private gift designated for a new video board.

"Mizzou Arena is entering its 10th season and is tremendous facility for our basketball programs, but we need to enhance the areas that impact the fan experience, student athlete well-being and assist in the recruitment of prospective student-athletes," Athletic Director Mike Alden said in a statement announcing the project. "In-game production and presentation is a significant factor in the game day experience for our fans and a new video board and sound system inside the Arena is a significant focus of this project. We also want to modernize our locker room and player lounge. We are proud to announce the first phase of that renovation" the player lounge "will begin immediately."

Deputy Athletic Director Doug Gillin was credited with helping secure the $1.5 million donation, which pushed the video board project ahead of the upcoming season.

"We will now begin to actively solicit private support for the next three phases of our renovation project, our team locker room and lounge, the player development area and our weight room," Gillin said in the news release. "We have a great deal of work to do, but we are committed, as are our fans, to provide Coach" Kim "Anderson with valuable recruiting tools to attract the most gifted
Multimillion dollar renovations expected for Mizzou Arena

Thursday, September 18, 2014 | 5:23 p.m. CDT; updated 9:23 p.m. CDT, Thursday, September 18, 2014

BY MITCHELL FERMAN

COLUMBIA – Missouri Athletics announced a multimillion dollar renovation project for Mizzou Arena on Thursday, including a $1.5 million video board funded through a private gift.

In addition to the Panasonic video board — set to be ready for this upcoming season — the athletics department said there will be upgrades to the player development area, facility entryway, the team lounge and the locker room. There will also be upgrades to the team academic area, and strength and conditioning facility.

The athletics department said the project began in the spring with new lighted signs outside the arena, as well as graphics and new paintings in the team tunnel. Missouri Deputy Athletic Director Doug Gillin will lead the renovations.

Athletics Director Mike Alden noted Mizzou Arena is entering its 10th season.

Construction in the men's basketball team lounge is scheduled to begin in the coming weeks for the start of this season.
Jane Goodall shares story of her life and studies

By ASHLEY JOST

Thursday, September 18, 2014 at 10:20 am Comments (4)

When renowned primatologist and conservationist Jane Goodall took the stage at Mizzou Arena on Wednesday night, she greeted the crowd of several thousand people with a chimpanzee howl that translates to "hello."

Goodall spent decades studying chimpanzees in Tanzania, learning about their behaviors, intelligence and family life and drawing parallels between humans and "man's closest relative." Using anecdotes going back to her childhood, she told the story of her life and studies to a crowd of more than 4,000.

Goodall remembers reading "Tarzan" at a very young age after she had already shown a keen interest in animals. Her first thought? "He married the wrong Jane."

It was a series of fortunate events that took Goodall to Africa. She grew up in an impoverished home in England with a love for animals and travel. She had no money for school or for travel but managed to save up from her job as a waitress and started her journey.

Goodall started working in Africa as a secretary for a museum in Kenya. She worked with Louis Leakey, a British paleoanthropologist and archaeologist who became a major force in Goodall’s life.

Leakey supported Goodall’s interest and allowed her to pursue the first deep study of chimpanzee behavior in an effort to better understand humans. Goodall didn’t have a college degree at the time, but Leakey preferred that because she had a more open mind. Animal behaviorists at the time didn’t believe animals had the capacity for emotions or thought.

Much of her journey was in the Kasakela chimpanzee community in Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania. Her first encounters with the chimpanzees were not what she anticipated.
“Chimps are very conservative,” she said. “They never saw a white ape before, which is basically what I was and am.”

The chimpanzees would scatter into the forest when she arrived. It took months before she had a breakthrough observation of a chimpanzee creating a tool out of a twig to access its food.

That’s just one of many observations Goodall made. She learned about what makes a leader in the chimpanzee community, primitive warfare, differences in vocal communication and their forms of touch, even the way they kiss.

“Chimps made it so easy for me to assert that there’s no sharp line between us and the rest of the animal kingdom,” she said. “The difference is in degree, not in kind.”

Goodall spoke about her efforts to eliminate the trade in the meat of wild African animals and to address factory farming, deforestation and other conservation issues.

Goodall came to MU as part of the Delta Gamma Foundation’s Lectureship in Values and Ethics, presented by the foundation and other on- and off-campus sponsors.

Lucinda Rice-Petrie, chairwoman of the lectureship, said there has been interest in bringing Goodall to MU since 2006, but she always seemed unattainable. When the lectureship found out about her North America tour, they had their opportunity.

“We want the audience to take away the idea that anyone can be involved in conservation of our natural resources,” Rice-Petrie said. Goodall is the 20th lecture in the series.

Goodall has been on a perpetual world speaking tour since 1986, never staying in one place for more than three weeks.
It seemed to symbolize, however, something of the history and the mission of the institution. The fact that it was a little hokey just reminded me who we are. There was mercifully brief speechifying, thanking of donors and the unveiling of a plaque.

**The occasion was the dedication of a new species of oak tree, developed by Mark Coggeshall, an assistant research professor of agroforestry. The 173d, 174th and 175th saplings stand now just to the south of the stream that bisects the park.**

After the ceremony, Prof. Coggeshall told me the new member of the swamp white oak family was developed over 11 years of conventional grafting in search of a variety that would start producing acorns earlier and more often than some of its cousins.

The Buck’s Unlimited Oak, as the offspring is called, will fruit in four or five years, as opposed to some ancestors’ 20, and yield acorns annually instead of every other year.

When I asked, he assured me that no controversial genetic modification techniques were employed.

He seemed a little embarrassed by all the attention, especially when a public relations person directed him to take one of the black-and-gold-painted shovels and re-enact dumping compost at the base of his tree. He did as ordered.

Earlier, his boss, Vice Chancellor and Ag School Dean Tom Payne, had noted that the oak sinks deep roots – “kind of a metaphor,” he added.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, wearing his trademark black and gold bow tie, linked the little oaks to the university’s four core values: discovery, excellence, respect and responsibility. He pointed out that since 2008, MU faculty have filed more than 465 patents and signed 250-plus licenses for new technologies developed here.

Revenue generation isn’t mentioned among those core values, but the chancellor’s comments left no doubt that this discovery, like the previously licensed creations, is intended to bring more than the “vibrancy” of intellectual achievement to the campus.

Buck’s Unlimited will be commercialized by the Forrest Keeling Nursery in Elsberry. MU will collect royalties from every tree sold. Wayne Lovelace, president of the nursery and an alumnus, sat in the front row with his daughter Kim, also an alum.
An information sheet I was handed helpfully noted that potential purchasers include “landowners and hunters seeking to attract wildlife.” Buck’s, it added, “is considered a native, non-invasive tree.”

The oak is a long-lived tree. These saplings have a projected life span of at least 100 years. When you consider that Chancellor Loftin was to be formally inaugurated later Thursday as the 22nd chief executive of our campus, a little long division suggests that these oaks could shade 12 to 14 generations of chancellors.

I introduced myself after the ceremony to Pete Millier, who had served as MC and who is, among other things, director of the Mizzou Botanic Garden, which includes Peace Park.

Is there a tree on campus that’s close to the university’s age, I asked. He doubted it and pointed across the stream toward a huge one.

That black walnut, he said, is the oldest we have, probably 100 to 150 years old. Of course, to count the rings and determine its age precisely, you’d have to cut it down.

Thursday was a day for planting, not cutting. It was a day for thinking back and looking ahead.

It was a day to be celebrated.

When Chancellor Loftin concluded his brief remarks, he paused. Then he instructed, “Take a deep breath.”

“M...I...Z,” he began. We replied on cue, “Z...O...U.”

George Kennedy is a former managing editor for the Missourian. He writes a weekly column for the Missourian.

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MU Professor calls findings of UC-Davis autism study exciting

September 19, 2014 By Mike Lear
A University of Missouri professor says he’s excited by the findings of a University of California-Davis study that reinforces the need to detect and treat autism spectrum disorder as early as possible.

The study indicates that when infants showing signs of autism were treated between the ages of 6 and 15 months old, they experienced significantly reduced symptoms. Most were reported to have no autism spectrum disorder or developmental delays by age 3.

UC-Davis says treatment for children diagnosed with autism typically begins when they are 3 or 4.

University of Missouri Professor SungWoo Kahng says he’s cautiously optimistic about the findings, but says it drives home to parents and doctors that early detection and treatment are vital.

“It has significant implications for early intervention with kids with autism,” says Kahng. “The sooner parents and practitioners can identify these symptoms and potentially diagnose kids with autism, the sooner the kids can start receiving treatment and the better off the child will be.”

Kahng says most significant, perhaps, is that those carrying out the study were able to identify symptoms of autism in children so young.

“As a behavioral researcher, the idea of intervening at such an early age is very, very exciting,” says Kahng. “It’s something that myself or my colleagues would love to pursue.”

He could have the chance to pursue it. Kahng says more study must be undertaken of larger groups – only seven babies were involved in UC-Davis’ study.

“Until researchers are able to have larger studies that demonstrate a broader change in symptoms, we’re still a little cautious to say, ‘Yes, this is a great method of preventing these symptoms from occurring,’” says Kahng.

Read more about UC-Davis’ findings on the University’s website.