



## President's Letter

Greetings fellow Tigers! As I write this, we are looking forward to a beautiful weekend. Maybe spring has finally sprung? I hope this latest issue of Tiger Tales finds you all well and enjoying the excitement of our basketball Tigers winning their first Big 12 title and finally making it back to the NCAA Tournament and making it to the Elite 8!

Your KC Chapter recently learned that it is the first alumni chapter to earn the distinguished Capstone status in 2009. This is the highest level of service that a Mizzou Alumni chapter can receive. This program is focused on six key aspects of service that mirror the University's guideposts for excellence – Discovery, Diversity, Pride, Respect, Responsibility and Tradition. Congratulations to all of our members on achieving this great honor once again!

### Here's some other news you'll find in this issue of Tiger Tales:

- Top ten reasons you won't want to miss the 2009 Black & Gold Tiger Ball
- How you can help Missouri students in need of financial aid get access to Missouri's public institutions
- Mark your calendars for the 2009 Friends of Mizzou Picnic & Auction
- Member Spotlight: Dan Meers - From Truman the Tiger to KC Wolf
- The KC Chapter is seeking new board members – nominate today!

**If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact any of the executive team members in the directory below. This is your Chapter and we value your feedback!**

**Go Tigers!**  
**Pat Shelley**  
**MAA-KC President**

### Top Ten Reasons You Won't Want to Miss the 2009 Tiger Ball



2009 marks the 10th anniversary of the Black and Gold Tiger Ball. Join your fellow Kansas City Tigers on Friday, April 17 for a night of live and silent auctions, dining and dancing to the tunes of "Valentine" (a regular act at the 75th Street Brewery) at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center. The Patron's Party begins at 6:30 with dinner at 7:30.

It doesn't take a David Letterman countdown to see that this "creative black-tie" event has made its mark on Kansas City! All auction proceeds benefit Mizzou student scholarships, so visit <http://www.kctigers.com/tigerball/> now to reserve your spot!

### Write Your Legislators - Missouri Students Need Your Help!



Access Missouri is the state's need-based scholarship program that provides funding to students in both the public

and the private sectors of higher education. Currently, this program is funded at about \$95 million per year and more than half of that funding is distributed to students attending private institutions.

SB390, introduced by Senators Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia and David Pearce, R-Warrensburg; and HB792 introduced by Representative Gayle Kingery, R-Poplar Bluff and several co-sponsors, would change the Access Missouri awards so that students in the four-year higher education institutions would receive the SAME awards.

**Under the current Access Missouri policy:**

- Two-year public students receive \$1,000 per year maximum.
- Four-year public students receive \$2,150 per year maximum.
- Private school students receive \$4,600 per year maximum.

**SB390 and HB792 Access Missouri amendments:**

- Two-year public students receive \$1,000 per year maximum.
- Four-year public students receive \$2,850 per year maximum.
- Private school students receive \$2,850 per year maximum.

**Why the changes are justified:**

Missouri ranks 47th in per-capita support for public higher education, the state ranks fourth in the percentage of state need-based aid that is provided to students attending private institutions.

Proposed changes to Access Missouri would balance the financial awards for all students attending four-year public or private institutions. This change would provide increased scholarship levels and access for more of the state's neediest students at our public institutions, making college attainable and affordable.

**How can you help?**

Calls, emails and letters needed to your legislator to ensure EQUAL ACCESS for Mizzou students. The Senate Education Committee had it's first hearing for SB390 on April 1, 2009 and will continue the hearing on April 8, 2009. It is important that your legislators, especially Senate Education Committee members, hear from you asking them to support SB390 for our students at four-year public higher education institutions. Visit the [Mizzou Legislative Network](#) and encourage your legislators to vote in favor of SB390 and HB792.

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**Save the Date – 2009 Friends of Mizzou Picnic & Auction**



Mark your calendar for the 2009 Friends of Mizzou Picnic & Auction. It's guaranteed to be packed full of family fun and entertainment. This long-standing Kansas City tradition will be held on Friday, August 21 at the John Knox Pavilion in Lees Summit. More information will be arriving in your mailbox soon!

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**Member Spotlight – From Truman the Tiger to KC Wolf**



Who says cats and dogs don't get along? Just ask Dan Meers. For nearly 25 years, he has donned a costume as both Truman the Tiger and KC Wolf to entertain millions

of fans around the world.

Meers (B.J. & B.A. '90) started his career as a mascot at Mizzou in 1986. He responded to a simple ad in the paper about tryouts for Truman the Tiger when he was a freshman, and it turned into a four-year gig. Meers even received national recognition for his talents and antics, competing in the National Collegiate Mascot Competition and placing second in 1988 and 1990 and beating out the Akron Yellowjacket for first place in 1989.

"I have so many great memories of Mizzou," reflects Meers. "I always tried to get as much as possible out of every day." His fondest memories are of the basketball trips. "It was always the mascot, Mini Mizzou and the cheerleaders on one bus. We played a lot of hands of UNO on those long drives," he jokes. "I loved being part of the atmosphere. I even have a little piece of the net from Mizzou's Big 8 championship. As Truman, I was out on the court when they cut the net down and just happened to catch a piece." It remains an important memento to him today.

Following graduation, Meers had accepted the role of Fredbird, mascot for the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team, when the Chiefs called. "I never expected to go to Kansas City," said Meers, a native of St. Charles, Mo. "I was very impressed with the organization and with the Hunt family. I'm now in my 19th season with the Chiefs and I can't imagine ever leaving this city or this team."

During his time with the Chiefs, Meers has traveled with the team throughout country and around the world, including Hong Kong, Berlin, Mexico, Jamaica and five Pro-Bowls. Even during the tough games (and seasons), Meers loves his career choice and has never looked back. "I don't allow the circumstances [of the game] to determine my attitude when I'm out on the field," said Meers. "I get to choose my attitude and I choose to be positive. When I step into that costume, it just happens."

Meers is a fascinating person to talk to and his enthusiasm, optimism, strong sense of faith and love of life are immediately obvious. But perhaps what makes him most unique is how he views his role as a mascot. He explained that most mascots make only non-speaking appearances. As KC Wolf, he takes a different approach to his visits putting an emphasis on public speaking. Meers shares motivational messages on everything from character building and education to fitness and "say no to drugs" with more than 150 groups of school kids, church camps, vacation Bible schools, and audiences of all ages each year.

And, while he loves spending Sundays in a wolf costume, making people laugh, Meers has a very noble goal for all of his work. "My faith is very important to me. I have been very blessed in my life and I want to be remembered as a character with character," he explains. "I'm not just a mascot, I'm a role model."

And it all started with a mascot tryout at Ol' Mizzou.

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## We're Hiring!

The KC MAA Chapter is looking for fellow Mizzou enthusiasts to join over sixty alumni who already work as advocates and ambassadors for the University of Missouri by serving on the Chapter's Board of Directors. The Board meets just six times per year. Directors are encouraged to participate in at least one standing or major event committee. Recent and not so recent graduates are all welcome! For more information on this rewarding Mizzou opportunity please contact Stuart Woody by May 1st at [swody@kc.rr.com](mailto:swody@kc.rr.com) or 816-305-3676.

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## Your Kansas City Chapter Leaders

Involvement from Kansas City area alumni is what makes this organization a model for other alumni chapters around the country. If you have any questions, or if you'd like to get involved with a committee, please contact any of the leaders at the email addresses above.

**President** – [Pat Shelley](#)

**President-elect (Columns Program)** – [Bill Newham](#)

**First Vice President (Membership)** – [Larry Finkemeier](#)

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