MISSOURI STATE

WE SPICED IT UP WITH A THEME

We sweetened the deal with stories sure to whet your appetite.



THE FOOD ISSUE

FALL 2026

THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHED FOR THE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

VOL. 21
ISSUE 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

All food, all the time. Every page.

From important agricultural research to important dessert creations, we have stories that span categories: Chefs. Restaurants. Farmers. Gardeners. Recipe creators and writers. Food executives and marketers. Student-athletes and the nutritionist who works with them. Alumni who work in hospitality, dining and many related fields. We got all the ingredients for a great magazine. We hope you feast on this issue and come back for seconds.

It's all from Mo State to your plate.



BREAK BREAD WITH THE BEARS: LET'S DO LUNCH ON CAMPUS!

Carrie's Café, the restaurant of the School of Hospitality and Agricultural Leadership, will be open to the public again this fall semester.

Since the late 1990s, students have managed the front and back of house, planned menus, prepared food, served patrons and marketed the restaurant.

The café on the fourth floor of Pummill Hall switches up its focus at least once a semester. The menu has focused on themes like French bistro, coastal Mediterranean, international barbecue and Asian fusion.

When possible, the chefs incorporate local ingredients like Mo State beef and herbs/produce from the school garden and Karls Hall greenhouse.

Carrie's is open select days during fall and spring semesters, from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Reservations are recommended.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW

MissouriState.edu/Carries **417-836-4409**

Missouri State

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Missouri State magazine is published three times a year by Missouri State University. Postmaster: Send address changes to Missouri State University, Alumni Association, 901 S. National Ave., Springfield, MO 65897

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Printed with soy ink. ALM 02-19-2026

ASA American Soybean Association
If you believe, belong.

?

The Alumni Association asked these questions on Facebook this summer, and hundreds of Bears replied.



WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO EAT ON CAMPUS?

Under the Sigma Kappa tree in front of Carrington Hall.
– Kellie McAnany Thomson

Our sorority house, Sigma Sigma Sigma, had the best muffaletta sandwiches!
– Nancy Killian

Spaghetti dinners at the track house, 1978.
– Katrina Kovarik Stevens

Student Union. Watched Luke and Laura get married. Someone brought in a cake. Many moons ago...
– Chris Winter

WHICH CAMPUS DINING HALL WAS YOUR FAVORITE AND WHY?

Whichever one had the ice cream machine, obviously!
– Neal A. Richardson Sr.

Kentwood Hall ... man, steak night was the bomb. We used to take the shuttle over there just for steak night.
– Renne Smith Craig

The one that (was in) the campus union. Freda, who worked there a long time, was the best! Great biscuits and gravy!
– Mark West

Blair-Shannon; would get lunch with my then-bestie (Hunter Micah). We get married in 2 days!
– Lauren Creek-Morris

Blair-Shannon! Nothing beats Gail's omelets for breakfast.
– Tara Vansell

Garst hands down! Especially late-night dinner during finals week.
– Desmond Warren



WHAT'S THE MOST MO STATE MEAL YOU CAN THINK OF?

A crisp Mountain Dew in Craig Hall from the vintage machine that dropped the cup, then poured the soda.
– Kim Burrow Casey

I've spent the last 40+ years searching for biscuits and gravy as good as the ones they served in the student union every Tuesday and Friday morning. I haven't found them yet.
– Laurie McBride

Ice cream floats at dinner in Blair-Shannon.
– Kerri Bond

Garst grilled cheese and fries with Bear sauce!
– Ashley Williamson

1987, Bears Den pizza.
– Jeff Cumley

Two glasses of O.J. and two glasses of milk with every breakfast. Such an indulgence!
– Rick Brown

The omelet bar in the mornings at Blair-Shannon.
– Jason Caimi



JOIN THE DISCUSSION

Find all answers, give your own opinions and look for more "we asked you" questions, all on the Alumni Association Facebook page.

AGRICULTURE

WORKSHOPS EMPOWER NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS



Dr. Christine Sudbrock, associate professor in the School of Hospitality and Agricultural Leadership, wants to help young people get into farming — and thrive.

"A lot of young farmers face significant challenges entering the industry," she said, "due to high start-up costs, limited access to farmland, funding, equipment and other resources."

Sudbrock believes value-added agriculture is a solution. This means taking a product and processing, transforming or repackaging it into a new form that increases its market value.

"It makes it easier for new farmers to enter the industry. For example, using goat milk to make cheese or soap doesn't require as much land or money (as other forms of farming)."

She joined forces with the Missouri Agriculture and Small Business Development Authority, and other organizations, to create workshops that empower new producers to succeed. The sessions sharpen their digital marketing and communication skills, helping them build visibility and grow their businesses.

"It's exciting to contribute to solutions that help young, passionate people succeed in the agriculture industry."

NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

EXPERT ON CLIMATE-SMART AG TRAVELS TO SPAIN

Dr. Asif Ishtiaque, an assistant professor in the School of Earth, Environment and Sustainability, is an expert in agricultural sustainability. He was among eight faculty members selected to go abroad this summer with a university fellows program.

Ishtiaque focuses on climate-smart agriculture, or CSA. CSA methods may ease the effects of climate change on agriculture — like drought, pests or diseases — without compromising production or profit. He took an eight-day trip to Barcelona, Spain, this summer. The city had innovative practices he wanted to explore, such as "superblocks," which close off some roads to cars, diverting traffic and creating green spaces/walking zones on inner streets. They are also known for "hybrid dunes," a defense against erosion on beaches.

"I'm most looking forward to exploring Barcelona's pioneering urban resilience initiatives firsthand," Ishtiaque said before the trip. "(These) will offer invaluable insights for my future programs."

AGRICULTURE/SCIENCES

BEARS' RESEARCH SOWS SEEDS FOR BETTER FRUIT



Missouri State faculty, staff and students make discoveries that support the fruit industry in our state and beyond.

MO STATE RESEARCH BRINGS ABOUT A BUNCH OF ADVANCEMENTS IN GRAPE GROWING

Our Fruit Experiment Station in Mountain Grove is the state's only licensed commercial winery and distillery that operates within a public university.

The station focuses on developing grape varieties suited for Missouri's climate. Visitors can attend workshops, tour the facility and sample products, all while learning how science shapes Missouri's wine industry.

Researchers there explore genetics to create fruit that is more disease-resistant and cold-hardy.

Just this year, Dr. Wenping Qiu and his team discovered and patented a new grapevine cultivar.

"We're over joyful," he said. "It's one of the two most significant achievements we've made for society. The other being our former discovery of a new grape virus."

GRADUATE STUDENT'S WORK IS PART OF FEDERAL ELDERBERRY STUDIES

A recent Bear grad contributed this year to a U.S. Department of Agriculture project on the American elderberry, an up-and-coming crop.

Despite increased demand for elderberry fruit, there's really not much known about its pollination — which is necessary for fruit to be produced.

Biology graduate student Jenny Burrow '23 & '26 — whose LinkedIn page includes the title "beesearcher" — was part of the lab of Dr. Avery L. Russell, associate biology professor.

Burrow focused on which insects and other pollinators visited elderberry flowers, and how those visits influenced fruit production.

The research was done as part of the federal Advancing American Elderberry initiative.

Burrow was recently admitted to a PhD program in St. Louis.

Learn about our Mountain Grove winery and view fruit events/workshops open to the public:
Ag.MissouriState.edu/StateFruit

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FACULTY, STUDENTS EXPLORE FOOD SECURITY IN ALASKA

Two faculty members led 14 students majoring in social work, psychology, dietetics and nursing on a trip to Anchorage, Alaska, this summer. They explored food security, among other topics, in a city home to many Alaskan Natives. It is also a region with a short growing season.

"One of the biggest things I wanted students to understand is that nutrition security is about so much more than whether food is available," said Stephanie Mitchell Urich, clinical instructor of nutrition and dietetics in the School of Health Sciences. "Land, water, resources, history, policy, conflict and culture can shape people's ability to access and use foods."

Kelly Dudley, clinical assistant professor of social work, collaborated with Urich to plan the itinerary.

Bears also volunteered in community gardens and at the Alaska Food Bank.

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

SOCIOLOGIST ALSO A CAFÉ OWNER, ENTREPRENEUR



Did you know Dr. Lyle Foster, associate professor of sociology, is also in the hospitality industry?

Foster and his relatives run several locations of Big Momma's Coffee and Espresso Bar, as well as a private event space, Q Enoteca, that has beer, wine and spirits.

The main location of Big Momma's and the event space are both on historic Commercial Street.

Drop by to try signature drinks, entrées and homemade pastries with names related to Route 66, Springfield's north side and — of course — momma.

BUSINESS

CLAW COFFEE BREWS UP SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT



At the McDonald Entrepreneurship Labs in Glass Hall, home of the College of Business, students create, market and sell real products and generate revenue.

Need a caffeine fix? Try their Claw Coffee, roasted in the Ozarks. Grizzly Grit is the dark roast and Maroon Morning is the medium.

Proceeds from sales help fund student wages, support scholarships and are invested back into future hands-on learning programs and student businesses.

Order a pound today!



Bon appétit, Bears.

Get ready to get hungry. This issue is dedicated to alumni who are the cream of the crop and bring home the bacon. The smart cookies who are the greatest things since sliced bread. Here, you'll meet chefs, restaurateurs, farmers, gardeners and distillers. You'll get to know alums who sizzle in the business side of the industry. We've found food stylists and writers, and even the alum behind Springfield's cashew chicken trail.

We spill the beans about exactly what student-athletes eat in a day (and why).

And because our public affairs mission is baked in, we share how campus and alums help those who are hungry.

We raise our glass to the people, places and events that nourish us. Ready for some food for thought? **Let's dig in.**

Bear chefs create culinary experiences

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN

DANIEL ERNCE '14: INTERNSHIP AT MICHELIN-STAR RESTAURANT IN EUROPE KICKSTARTS A CUTTING-EDGE CAREER



PHOTO BY JYM WILSON

Daniel Ernce says he became a chef "by accident."

Ernce came to Missouri State on a writing scholarship. His father, Keith Ernce, taught at the university for 20 years in outdoor recreation and leisure studies.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in professional writing and an individualized culinary studies minor, Ernce began work at Marlin (now Connections), a nationally recognized food marketing agency. There, he worked for their innovations group, learning from seasoned chefs with storied careers.

He realized he was going to trade his ambitions of being a cookbook author for a lifelong culinary pursuit.

From there, he learned the Michelin-star restaurant Noma in Denmark was opening a sister restaurant and accepting internships. He thought himself woefully underqualified, but applied regardless. He landed an internship at 108, a one-Michelin-star restaurant in Copenhagen.

"All the tropes you see on TV, shouting chefs, all the bad things you have heard about are true," Ernce said. "It was an abusive environment but I wouldn't trade that experience for the world. It made me, shaped me and formed me."

Ernce returned to Springfield and became co-founder of Progress, which started as a pop-up restaurant and became a brick-and-mortar, opening in 2018. It was cutting-edge, fine dining in Springfield. During this time, he was named a Rising Star chef by Feast Magazine.

In 2022, he went to the ER with what he feared were kidney stones. Instead, he was diagnosed with stage-three testicular cancer. After chemo and surgery, he bested cancer. Unfortunately, Progress closed the following year.

After shuttering the restaurant, Ernce moved to Bentonville, Arkansas. Today, he works as the corporate chef for Mountaire Farms in southern Delaware, the nation's fourth-largest poultry producer. In this role, he focuses on team training, product innovation, corporate communications and event support.

Though he doesn't miss working in restaurants, Ernce still hosts pop-up dinners a few times a year.

On his personal website, he writes: "Basically, if something has to do with food, I'm working on it or adjacent to it."

JAMES MARTIN ’03: GILARDI’S RESTAURANT OWNER SWITCHED TRACKS FROM EASTERN RELIGION TO FINE DINING

Buddhism taught James Martin that life always changes.

He came to Missouri State on a debate scholarship and planned to become a constitutional law attorney. But he switched his major to Eastern religions with the intent of becoming a professor.

Today, he owns Gilardi’s Ristorante, an upscale Italian venue on Walnut Street in Springfield.

“The difference between owning a restaurant and any other business is I sell memories,” he said. “I sell experiences.”



PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

Martin started in the food industry at age 16, and continued to work in fine dining establishments in his college years. He waited tables at some of Springfield’s most fabled establishments: Gallery Bistro, Bijan’s, Agrario and Gilardi’s.

He bought Gilardi’s when he was 35.

Martin made the mistake of hiring his friends. Within a year, many “friends” stole from him and he had to fire them.

“All my kitchen staff left except a dishwasher,” Martin said. “One day I had a staff, and the next day I had no staff and no recipe books. I closed down for three days and reopened. I worked 18- to 19-hour days. I had a small menu.”

Eventually, he built the menu back up. Now, he is known for dishes like his fall-off-the-bone lamb shank, braised for 10 hours and accented with rosemary from his garden. His pesto limonata dish is a house-made fettuccine infused with basil and lemon zest.

Gilardi’s is known for its gardens, which he planted. At one time, Martin harvested 100 pounds a week of fresh produce. Now, he’s 15 years older — so he focuses more on herbs, flowers and the beauty of the gardens.

This year, to celebrate the restaurant’s 25th anniversary, he’s hosted monthly garden parties and donated proceeds to a different charity each month.

He’s proud of what he’s built.

“I consider myself one of the best providers of food, service and atmosphere,” Martin said. “I want people to feel like they are giving themselves an experience they won’t forget.”

ANNA DAVIS SAUNDERS ’16: PIANIST TURNED PRIVATE CHEF, WHO WON ON FOOD NETWORK, SAYS “MISSOURI STATE OPENED THE DOOR”

When Anna Saunders had to drop her piano performance major because of a medical issue, she leaned into her passion for cooking.

Saunders was raised on a farm. At Missouri State she was a member of the Chorale, the prestigious choir that often travels the world. She cherishes the memory of making a meal for 50 choir members over a campfire at Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Saunders took hospitality classes and worked at Carrie’s, the student-run restaurant. She finished with a general studies major.

“Music and cooking are both creative,” she said. “Culinary was that outlet when I couldn’t play anymore.”

After graduation, her confidence got a boost: She won the Food Network’s “Chopped at Home” competition.

Saunders then began a career working in Michelin-star restaurants in Chicago and New York. She worked in kitchens in South Africa and Norway. Her mother is Norwegian, so Saunders wanted to trace her family’s culinary roots.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she returned to Springfield. She moved into recipe development, became a private chef and caterer, offered private classes and started Scandinavian pop-up dinners.

She’s worked for companies like Bass Pro doing food styling.

Over the years, she’s won a variety of recipe competitions. This October, she is competing in the World Food Championships.

Saunders has stayed connected to Mo State, offering private chef dinners for auction at Chorale events and taking trips with Chorale alumni.



PHOTO PROVIDED

In 2025, she followed her husband to Florida for a job. She now teaches online for an art conservatory in Louisiana.

Saunders is a certified nutritional health consultant and is writing a book that will be a food-travel memoir with recipes.

“Missouri State opened the door and showed me what culinary has to offer,” Saunders said. “I took a lot of front-of-house classes and that was so important, especially because I ran my own business as a private chef. I needed to know the professional side of things. I couldn’t have done it without Missouri State.”

Owners, operators bring buffet of experiences to the table

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD



CHRISTOPHER TURBOV '08: SERVING BIG FLAVORS FROM A TINY KITCHEN

When Christopher Turbov transferred to Missouri State to finish his degree in sociology, he fell in love with the location.

"Springfield in general has such a personable and genuine feel to it," Turbov said. "That includes Missouri State. Springfield is a tough spot to leave."

After some time living in Illinois and California post-graduation, Turbov returned to Springfield and opened The 7th on Walnut.

The downtown sandwich shop offers cheesesteaks, burgers, subs, house-cut fries and more. This full menu might be bigger than the pint-size dining space — it's only 7 feet wide!

The restaurant's close proximity to Missouri State helps Turbov still feel connected to campus. The 7th also donates to student groups and welcomes plenty of Mo State students and staff as regular diners.



STEPHANIE LIU '15: USING HER NOODLE TO MANAGE JAPANESE EATERY

Before Stephanie Liu was a restaurant owner, she was a regular customer at a Korean restaurant. It was run by her now-husband and his mother.

When she and her husband started dating, they decided to open a new business inspired by Liu's time living in Japan. That became OMO Japanese Soul Food in Springfield.

Liu credits her Missouri State degree in accounting for helping her manage the financial side of the business.

OMO has grown into a student-loved spot for ramen, bento boxes and more.

"It is a great honor to be voted as one of (the students') favorite restaurants. It really means a lot to me as an alum," Liu said. "It also motivates me to keep improving every day."

THE RESTAURATEURS: THEY'RE THE TOAST OF THE TOWN



ANNE '08/CLAYTON BAKER '09, '11: CO-OWNING MANY DOWNTOWN FIXTURES

Anne and Clayton Baker met in college at Finnegan's Wake, a bar they now own.

They both worked in the food industry as students, and their careers have evolved to bring them back.

At Missouri State, Anne earned a bachelor's degree in international management. Clayton received degrees in finance and insurance risk management, along with an MBA. Clayton also played hockey for the Ice Bears.

"Since then, Clayton and I maintained our love for the food industry," Anne Baker said. "We work well together and share a love for providing fun and memorable experiences for our customers."

They couldn't pass up opportunities to co-own some downtown staples: Civil Kitchen, Finnegan's Wake, J.O.B. Public House and Tinga Tacos.

The Bakers like to give back by supporting local charities through fundraising events, like annual holiday trivia at Finnegan's.

"Our experience at Missouri State helped us build strong relationships while connecting us to our community," Anne Baker said. "We feel extremely blessed to be a go-to for so many students for so long."



NICOLE BROWN '05: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH DOWNTOWN SPOTS

Nicole Brown was the first student to graduate with an art history degree from Missouri State.

Now, as co-owner of J.O.B. Public House and MudLounge, she channels that energy into making these two downtown spots special for guests.

"Missouri State gave me the foundation to think creatively, connect with people and appreciate the role culture plays in building community," Brown said. "Those lessons have stayed with me from the classroom to owning bars and restaurants, where bringing people together is at the heart of what we do."



CHRIS TIMMERMAN '19: DISHING UP DUTCH CRUNCH BREAD AT HIS DELI

An alumni connection in the hospitality leadership program led Chris Timmerman to his first job after college at the Hotel Nikko in San Francisco.

There, he was introduced to Dutch crunch bread, which has a soft interior and a sweet, crunchy top. It's now a signature part of his sandwiches at Big Belly Deli in Florissant, Missouri.

The Big Belly Special started the shop — ham, turkey, soppressata, white cheddar, bacon, lettuce, tomato, onion, pickle and a vinaigrette spread with black pepper.

He credits his hands-on classes in food and beverage as helpful for his success.

"Carrie's Café is awesome. That goes to show what Missouri State has to offer: A student-led restaurant on campus," Timmerman said. "The professors and facilities are top tier as well."



THE RESTAURATEURS: THEY'RE THE TOAST OF THE TOWN



EBBETS FIELD IS BACK, THANKS TO ALUMNI COUPLE

A "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity led the two to purchase and revive the classic venue near campus, which closed in 2024.

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD | PHOTOS BY JESSE SCHEVE

What's your Ebbets story? Did you watch a game, have a burger, meet up with friends? It's likely you did. After all, many generations of Bears have fond memories of Ebbets Field.

More than 40 years ago, the restaurant and pub opened just steps from Springfield's campus. It closed in January 2024.

Sydney and Jerrad Davis had plenty of college outings there — but one stands out.

"I came here with my friends before we went on our first date," Sydney said. "Jerrad picked me up here."

Sydney graduated in 2019 with a bachelor's in entertainment management. Jerrad graduated with a master's in project management in 2021. He also played lacrosse and coached the men's and women's lacrosse teams.

In 2025, the same year they were married, the historic house on Walnut Street went up for sale. The Davises knew they had to revive the place that had once been a favorite hangout.

"When we heard it closed, we were really sad. I also worked here in college," Sydney said. "When we found out it was for sale, we were living in St. Louis and had just gotten married. We had always talked about opening a bar and restaurant. It was like this once-in-a-lifetime moment."

They reopened Ebbets in March 2026. They've brought back long-time menu favorites — including the pizza many patrons missed — and filled the space with Mo State athletics memorabilia.

"We spent a lot of time looking through old photos to see if we could find those items on Facebook Marketplace or at thrift stores," Jerrad said. "We have a few original items we put back in their old spots."

The original Ebbets Field was opened by Nick Russo, a fellow Bear. Russo started Ebbets in 1981 where the Bear Park South parking garage now stands.

He eventually moved it to historic Walnut Street in 1994, and it has been there since through different owners.

There was a special connection between the Davises and Russo, too.

"Nick was my high school English teacher," Sydney said. "A couple months after we got the place, we reached out to him. We spent time listening to his fun stories. He gave us a lot of advice, and we showed him the little details like his original sign from the old location hanging out back."

The Davises are embracing the history of the restaurant, while looking forward to more memories to come.

"We love hearing all the stories from alumni parents now bringing their students for orientation at Missouri State," Jerrad said.

And as another school year started this August, Sydney said, "now current students can come in and experience it for themselves."



BEARS' DESSERT BUSINESS MAKES NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR CAMPUS SWEETER

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD | PHOTOS BY JESSE SCHEVE

Autumn and Kyle Davis opened Buttermilk, an ice cream and dessert spot, just a few blocks from where they both once attended classes.

The pair splits responsibilities.

"We joke about it and say that I'm the CEO and he's the creative director," Autumn Davis said.

Kyle is a pastry chef with previous roles at local restaurants like The Order and Progress. He also competed on season one of Food Network's "Summer Baking Championship."

Now, he brings his scratch-made pastry expertise to ice creams, sorbets and baked goods — like his signature milk and honey dessert — available in Springfield's Rountree neighborhood.

Buttermilk rotates the flavors and menu items every few weeks. Kyle estimates that at least one item on every menu features locally grown herbs and seasonal fruit.

"We like to travel a lot and eat when we travel. There are so many good restaurateurs and chefs out there. That's a main inspiration for Buttermilk," Kyle Davis said. "We want this to be a place with quality items made by real people who care."

Autumn earned a bachelor's in general business in 2021, and now manages the operations side of Buttermilk. That includes the finances, marketing and long-term strategy.

"Sometimes you have the creative passion in a business, but there's no financial or business side. That can be really difficult," Autumn said. "Lucky for us, we have both. We have opposite talents we are able to bring together."

They play to their strengths, Kyle said: "There's that partnership in almost everything we do."

Their daughters, Cali and Charlotte, also help out by running the walk-up window.

"When we opened the shop, we honestly couldn't have done it without them. We want them to feel a sense of ownership in this; this is our family's business," Autumn said. "They take a lot of pride in that, and it's really cool to see."

So, why Buttermilk? The name comes from their tangy, sweet best-selling flavor.

"Buttermilk was an ice cream flavor I'd made for a few years and would surprise people with," Kyle said. "People hear 'buttermilk' and have bad memories of grandma and grandpa drinking it. It was really fun to make it into an ice cream and have people blown away that they actually liked it."

Kyle was a Bear as a fine arts major with an emphasis in photography and minor in art history. He enjoys finding ways to apply concepts of fine art to the culinary arts.

"I really fell in love with flavor profiles. With the art history background, being able to study different styles, time periods and countries gave me a good palette for what's out there," Kyle said. "Plating desserts, you get to make art and eat it."

A cherry on top for them: They still have connections to campus. Buttermilk employs a few students, and it has quickly become a favorite spot to study or hang out.

"Being so close to Missouri State is such a huge part of our business and what we love," Autumn said. "It's that neighborhood, community feel."

THE RESTAURATEURS: THEY'RE THE TOAST OF THE TOWN



WHAT WOULD BE THEIR MO STATE FLAVOR?

We had to ask Kyle and Autumn their visions for a Missouri State ice cream. "Oh, that's such a good question," Kyle said. Autumn said: "My mind instantly goes to maroon, or what Bears eat, so: blackberries." Kyle said: "I would tackle that by starting with how it looks, so try to tie in some maroon. You've got cranberries, stewed strawberries. It would probably be some sort of sundae with at least three different textures on top — something crunchy and sweet."



MIKE FLAVIN '03: RULING THE ROOST — ALL FOUR LOCATIONS (AND COUNTING)

Mike Flavin founded The Roost Bar & Grill in 2009.

He now owns four locations in Springfield and Republic, Missouri, and plans to franchise.

The business was inspired by love for the St. Louis Cardinals, his hometown team, so the menu leans into chicken.

His degree in marketing management prepared him for the business world, and Flavin now hires a lot of Missouri State students.

"I loved Missouri State," said Flavin. "I had a great time. Sophomore year, I met my future wife, Abrielle Thornton '04. I made lifelong friends I still get together with."

— Written by Juliana Goodwin





MATT KRUPA '94: PASTA EXPRESS OWNER DEDICATED TO GIVING BACK TO MO STATE

When Matt Krupa visited his sister at Missouri State, he decided to enroll.

"I never had a plan until that weekend," Krupa said. "I was in the restaurant business since I was 16 and realized there was a great hospitality department there."

That quick trip changed Krupa's life and bettered the future of other Bears. Krupa earned a bachelor's degree in what was then called hospitality and restaurant administration.

He's more than an alum. Over the years, the St. Louis native has established a scholarship, served on an advisory board, created internships for students in the hospitality department and hired many Bears.

Krupa estimates 40% of his employees across all businesses are students or alumni. Krupa owns the Springfield-based Pasta Express franchise and a banquet company. He started working at Pasta Express while he was in college, just a few months after it was founded. The Italian restaurant is known for baked dishes, quick service and catering.

"I had the time of my life," he said. "The hospitality part of it was so welcoming. When I started taking those classes, it felt like home. The teachers and administrators were really engaging."

After college, he briefly moved away but came back to help a friend open a restaurant. One day, a Pasta Express owner told him Smitty's grocery store wanted the eatery in their grocery stores.

"I was like: That is perfect," he said. "I'd like to do it."

He became a franchisee in 1995. The restaurants expanded into six Smitty's grocery stores around the Ozarks. He owned three of the restaurants. But then, Albertsons bought out Smitty's. The stores and locations inside closed by the end of 2000. In 2000, he moved Pasta Express to Battlefield Road and Highway 65. In 2004, Krupa bought the company and become franchise owner.

In 2006, he started the Pasta Express Scholarship for Mo State students in the hospitality leadership department.

"Being a Bear, I've been influenced by a lot of local entrepreneurs, and I always saw that they gave back to the community," Krupa said. "They took me under their wing and helped me grow my business and it inspired me to give back."

In 2009, Krupa opened 425 Downtown LLC, a banquet and catering company. He operated out of a space on Walnut Street. In 2023, his sales manager, Rebekah Shockey '14, who has a bachelor's degree in hospitality and restaurant administration, bought half the business. They now manage The Old Glass Place, which is owned by the Missouri State University Foundation. They offer internships to students.

"There are two other Pasta Express locations, and those owners — C.J. Miles '10 and Ed Quasius '95 — were hospitality majors. We are all alumni," he said.

Outside of work, Krupa has three children who range in age from 17-22. The oldest, Georgia Krupa, graduated in 2025 with a degree in business leadership and management from Mo State.

"If I can give back, I think it's great," he said. "Missouri State has always been good to me."

— Written by Juliana Goodwin



TESSA COOPER '16: SHE FOUND NOURISHMENT FOR HER COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH LIFESTYLE WRITING

Tessa Cooper is a writer and photographer specializing in food, interior design and lifestyle content. Her husband, Chandler Cooper '18, is also a Bear with a vocal music education degree.

How did you discover a love of diverse foods?

I would definitely say through traveling. When Chandler was in college, he got to go on several tours with the Chorale. During their Scandinavian tour, I booked my own trip there to attend the concerts and see the sights. I traveled with Anna Davis Saunders, a fellow Bear and private chef *(editor's note: Learn more about her on page 9!)*. We visited her family in Norway, and they gave us some of the most incredible culinary experiences. One of my favorite memories was learning how to forage for shellfish and make pasta with what we caught. That's where I fell in love with documenting great food and travels through photography and writing.

Tell us the story of your career.

I have a degree in public relations with a minor in design. I initially wanted to work in nonprofit PR, so I joined Ozarks Food Harvest and was there for almost two years. I started freelancing around 2018 to save up for our honeymoon, and I fell into the food niche by accident. At the time, Feast Magazine, a Missouri food publication that has since folded, needed Springfield-based freelance writers. I got to talk to some of our region's most brilliant food creators and rising stars through their assignments. Once Feast stopped covering Springfield news, 417 Magazine reached out and offered me a freelance food editor role. It's been such a good experience!

What does your role at 417 Magazine entail?

One of my biggest responsibilities is writing a weekly food newsletter called Table Talk, where I share breaking food news and highlight great dishes. I also write articles for the magazine's Taste section.

You're also in national publications.

Yes, I contribute on a monthly basis to digital publications like House Beautiful, Better Homes & Gardens, Southern Living and The Spruce. Chandler and I live in a Victorian home we restored in the Midtown neighborhood, and I often get to write essays about our house projects for these sites.

— Written by Michelle S. Rose



JULIANA GOODWIN '02: SHE WHIPS UP RECIPES AND STORIES FOR PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Juliana Goodwin is a globe trotter who has visited 76 countries/territories and a food columnist, recipe developer and food photographer who's freelanced for USA Today, The New York Times, AAA Explorer, Arkansas Living Magazine, Feast and more. She also works full-time at Missouri State as the senior writer/editor with creative services.

When did you first know you loved food?

I was obsessed from childhood. I would ask at dinner, "What's for breakfast?" I learned to bake from my grandma and mom. I started cooking and developing recipes when I was young, about 7. I would get up on Saturday and bake goodies, then set up a sale in the hallway at home.

How did you choose Missouri State?

My dad was in the foreign services. I moved to the U.S. when I was 16. I have two bachelor's degrees, one in English from a university in Philadelphia — but I didn't do any internships, which was a mistake. In 2000, my sister moved to Springfield and I visited her. I decided to take summer classes to build references. Mo State told me, "In one year we can help you earn a second degree and get real experiences." So, I earned a bachelor's degree in journalism, a minor in history and had two internships, which led to a job. I had amazing professors.

How did you build a career related to food?

In the early 2000s, I won recipe contests from Better Homes & Gardens and the USA Rice Federation, and was a runner-up in Cook's Country. I was published in Cooking Light. Next, I was food columnist for the Springfield News-Leader from 2004-2014. I left to freelance. In 2019, I joined Mo State's marketing team.

How can people find your recipes?

Google me. I also run a page called Trips, Sips and Dips on Facebook. It combines my loves for travel, wine and cooking.

What is a food "miss" for you?

The most disgusting thing I ever had was raw cuttlefish liver in Spain. It was as horrific as you could imagine. I almost threw up. I almost cried. It was so bad. The craziest thing I've eaten was in the Amazon. They're called lemon ants. When you touch them to your tongue, they explode like a pop candy and taste like freshly squeezed lemon. It was wild!

— Written by Michelle S. Rose

BEARS GROW HEALTHY LOCAL FOODS, HELP OTHERS RECONNECT WITH THE LAND







PEYTON ANDREWS '15: ALUMNA WENT FROM WORKING IN POLITICS TO OWNING A YOU-PICK FARM

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in political science and government, Peyton Andrews worked as a gubernatorial campaign manager and then for the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce.

But in April 2026, she bought Tasty Acres, a you-pick farm in north Springfield.

It was a return to her roots: Andrews grew up in Marshfield on a strawberry farm. Her husband works for John Deere, and they have an agritourism farm.

"We wanted to connect more with our community, feed the community and help them understand where the food comes from," she said.

The farm belonged to a family friend and has been in business for 15 years.

Tasty Acres is mostly known for berries, especially strawberries, but even after that season is over in the summer, customers can pick other produce. In the fall, the farm transitions to you-pick sunflowers and pumpkins. Winter includes a holiday experience.

Tasty Acres donates excess food to Ozarks Food Harvest.

"We are more of an agritourism business. We want people to come out for the experience, to understand where their food comes from," Andrews said. "Farms today have to do a lot of different things just to make ends meet."

— Written by Juliana Goodwin



MAILE AUTERSON: CLASS PROJECT GREW INTO 16 COMMUNITY GARDENS

Maile Auterson's father was a farmer who lived to be 100 years old, and much of what she ate as a child was grown on their family farm.

"My dad always said, 'We were organic; we just didn't know that's what it was called back then,'" Auterson said.

She uses those roots as the founding executive director of Springfield Community Gardens, or SCG.

SCG started as a group project when Auterson was majoring in geography and regional planning. Even after it was graded (an A), Auterson knew she wanted to keep it going.

She left the university in 2011, though she plans to finish her degree later, and jumped into keeping the garden afloat. Auterson earned financial support from AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA. Springfield Community Gardens also received a federal grant in the form of a prestigious Community Food Projects award, which it has now won twice.

"We started out with a $25 donation, and now we have a $3 million budget," Auterson said. "That class project has provided me with a job for the last 12 years."

Now, SCG has 17 employees and 16 separate gardens. They work with both Mercy and CoxHealth healthcare systems in Springfield. Their produce is delivered to senior centers, public libraries, the GLO Center, Springfield Public Schools, Crosslines and Ozarks Food Harvest, just to name a few sites.

They also provide resources and training for farmers. This includes coordinating a new farmers' market on Cherry Street, just east of campus.

Auterson and Springfield Community Gardens also partner with Missouri State on initiatives like our own campus garden, the Bear Pantry, the dietetics kitchen and service-learning projects. SCG also worked with the Darr College of Agriculture on a farm school.

"It is so important to know where your food comes from. We want to live in a place where everyone has access to local food, and where farmers are making a living off farms," Auterson said. "Everybody gets healthy when farmers are supported."

— Written by Taylor Ladd



WILL CHILES '05: FAMILY LAND USED FOR FARM, UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND A NONPROFIT

Will Chiles wears two hats: He's manager of his family's 250-acre farm, and the executive director of a nonprofit.

His grandparents started Rockspan Farm, which he runs with his family. That includes his brother John, a Bear from '08. They grow pawpaw, nut trees and timber. They also rent the land to other farmers.

In 2026, they parceled off part of the property and turned it into Sac River Arboretum. The nonprofit "tree museum" will be used for education, conservation, research and community engagement.

The Chiles family has a history with Missouri State: Five out of seven Chiles children, and their mom, are graduates. Over the years, they have partnered with professors and allowed them to use their property for research.

"Dr. Alexander Wait, professor of biology, is doing research with two graduate students on native river cane (one of three bamboo species native to the U.S.)," Chiles said. "It was important to indigenous people, but we've lost about 98% of the canebrakes (thickets of the plant). We are interested in learning more about river cane and learning how to establish it because it doesn't grow as aggressively as Asian bamboo."

They also host folk classes in spring and fall. They offered a mushroom inoculation class with The Ozarks Society, and Chiles says they hope to establish a folk school.

They are also developing programming for Springfield Public Schools.

"One thing we want to help kids realize is there are a lot of different jobs working outdoors: ecological restoration, conservation, landscaping, economic opportunities," Chiles said. "We as a culture need to reconnect with the land. Kids don't get outside hardly at all. They don't know the trees around them or the rivers or animals, and that is part of our heritage. It's who we are as Ozarkians and human beings."

— Written by Juliana Goodwin

FROM WEDGES TO WHISKEY, DRIVES TO DISTILLERIES

FORMER GOLFER'S LIFE AFTER COLLEGE HAS BEEN ANYTHING BUT PAR FOR THE COURSE

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN | PHOTOS PROVIDED

Bill Welter '00 came to Missouri State on a golf scholarship.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in psychology, he went to work in St. Andrews, Scotland, a golf mecca: "In a way, it was like a pilgrimage."

Welter wanted to dive into the history of the sport. While there, he landed a job at a restaurant — and discovered that Scotland produces some of the world's best whiskey.

"I went over there with the intent of getting an education in golf, but actually ended up getting an education in hospitality and whiskey," Welter said.

Welter is a native of Valparaiso, Indiana. In Scotland, he befriended an Australian who was also in love with the beverage.

His friend went back to Tasmania and opened a distillery. Welter followed and worked there until he'd learned the craft well enough to open his own business.

FAMILY NOW RUNS TWO DISTILLERIES

In 2010, Welter launched Journeyman Distillery, a hand-crafted, organic whiskey and spirits distillery in Three Oaks, Michigan.

Today, there are two locations of Journeyman. The other is in his hometown in Indiana.

Journeyman experiments with different beverages, but has three at its core:

- Last Feather Rye, a rye whiskey.
- Featherbone Whiskey, a bourbon.
- Corsets, Whips & Whiskey, which is 100% wheat whiskey.



Most of their ingredients are certified organic, non-GMO grains sourced from local family farms, which he wanted to support.

"It was something we believed in," Welter said. "We really felt strongly that the product was better with certified organic and kosher grains."

At the Michigan location, they have a restaurant, three event spaces for weddings and corporate events, and a 30,000-square-foot golf putting green behind the distillery.

They offer tours of the distillery seven days a week in the summer.

His wife, Johanna, handles corporate sales and events for the business. Previously, she worked at Ritz and Four Seasons hotels, so she brought a level of "sophistication and world-class service" he said he didn't have. Their daughter, Islay, also has a tie to the business: She is named after the famous whiskey region in Scotland.

He's now "distilled" what he's learned into a book, "Journeyman: How I Learned the Craft of Whiskey and the Art of Hospitality." It's coming out in 2027.

MODELING PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN ACTION

Welter is a Citizen Bear. He founded a nonprofit that raises money to send children to summer camp. It's the same camp his mom, he and his daughter Islay all attended.





"As a kid, I loved it, but not every kid can go to camp," Welter said. "We were looking for kids who maybe had challenges, and that the experience of going to camp could make an impact on their lives and their futures."

The nonprofit is 100% funded by a festival they host every fall. Welter sells used whiskey barrels to breweries, which are then used to age stouts and other beers. As he built relationships with breweries, Welter decided it would be fun to have an event where people could taste those brews and raise money for his nonprofit. It has brought in more than $150,000.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH HIS ALMA MATER

Although he graduated more than 20 years ago, Welter still comes back to visit campus and stays in touch with friends he made here.

"The education I got at Missouri State was instrumental in really helping us be a success with Journeyman, but also just helping me to navigate life," Welter said.

"It seems like the campus is growing by leaps and bounds and having incredible success, and I'm pleased to say that I had a chance to go there."



Alumna makes everything look

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD | PHOTOS BY JESSE SCHEVE

Food stylist/recipe developer Tina Nguyen Bulger works with nationally known companies. She also cooks up a community over shared meals.

Plopping a scoop of mashed potatoes in an ice cream cone. Putting cocoa butter lotion on a tortilla. Melting cheese by using a clothing steamer.

These visual tricks are all in a day's work for Tina Nguyen Bulger '18, a nurse turned food stylist and recipe developer.

NURSE FOUND COOKING AS A WAY TO COPE WITH COVID

Nguyen Bulger graduated from Missouri State with a bachelor's degree in exercise science and a career plan to become a full-time nurse.



She next graduated from nursing school in 2020 during the spring of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During those first weeks, stuck at home, cooking at home shifted from a chore to a fulfilling hobby.

"Cooking was how I coped," Nguyen Bulger said.

Since restaurants were closed, she started making anything she was craving. She would also post photos of her meals on Instagram, sharing what she'd practiced in the kitchen.

The more she posted, the more she was asked for recipes. Now, she has gained hundreds of followers with her Instagram account @OverTheTable_Food.

As the pandemic lingered, many professionals working in healthcare felt major burnout — Nguyen Bulger included.

"I wanted to help people, and I loved that aspect of my job," Nguyen Bulger said. "But honestly, cooking was my outlet to de-stress. I wanted to build this hobby and this new-found love for food."

She had a connection at Springfield-based food content production studio Bon Aperture Productions. They asked if she would be interested in helping on set.

"Other than my stuff on Instagram, I don't have a food background. I didn't cook in a restaurant; I didn't go to culinary school," Nguyen Bulger said. "It was exciting to have someone reach out and say, 'Hey, we see your stuff. We like it. Do you want to come help?'"

It was a tempting opportunity, but at the time Nguyen Bulger felt obligated to focus on her duties as a full-time nurse.

PAVING HER OWN PATH TO MOVE INTO FOOD FULL TIME

About one year later, she decided to leave her nursing position and travel with her husband.

"We were driving down the West Coast, and I was like, 'I still want to pursue food. How can I get back into doing that?'" Nguyen Bulger said. "I reached back out to Bon Aperture."

Since then, Nguyen Bulger has worked as a food stylist with them. Her roles include prepping the studio kitchen, making food for photo shoots and getting products ready for closeups.

Her food styling work has included clients like Maruchan instant ramen, Mission Foods — the top tortilla manufacturer in the U.S. — and grocery store chain Harris Teeter. Recently, Nguyen Bulger worked on an infomercial set for a specialized blender brand.

"I've learned to just put yourself out there. Things don't come if you wait. I moved from Arkansas to Springfield to go to Missouri State. I didn't know anyone, so I've learned you have to pave your own path to make connections," Nguyen Bulger said. "I definitely attribute that to my experience at Missouri State."

"I FIND MYSELF BEING A COMMUNITY BUILDER"

Nguyen Bulger focuses on homecooked comfort meals.

"I just want it to make you feel warm when you eat it — like something that reminds you of home or of a good memory. Food can definitely bring that out in everyone."

That feeling includes connecting with her family's background through dishes she learned to make with her mom and aunts.

"I feel passionate about cooking my ethnic food. I'm Vietnamese, and that's the food I grew up with," Nguyen Bulger said. "I tend to gravitate towards soups; I don't care what temperature it is outside. That's how it is in Vietnam — it's really humid, but there's food stalls outside selling hot broth and noodles. It's a vibe to just eat, sweat and slurp."

She believes in bonding over shared meals. She hosts dinner parties for friends, cooks for her family and hosts a cookbook club for fellow foodies.

"I find myself being a community builder — it brings me so much joy," Nguyen Bulger said. "My passion for food comes from bringing people together and cooking for the people I love."



Family style: The menu for our meal

Nguyen Bulger loves to host friends and fellow Bears in her home kitchen. Here's what was for dinner when Missouri State magazine was invited to join.

- Brothy soup with tofu, mushroom, carrot and chrysanthemum leaves
- Cabbage, carrot and onion salad with fish sauce vinaigrette
- Soy-marinated quail eggs
- Fresh spring rolls with shrimp and peanut dipping sauce
- Lemongrass chicken
- Vietnamese shaking beef with peppers

Bears and the food industry: A delicious pairing

Nathan Traw ’11: **Biology graduate at Walmart headquarters fuses science with food safety**

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE S. ROSE I PHOTO PROVIDED



When Nathan Traw was a student, he started Mo State’s Microbiology Club. Researching bacteria, viruses, fungi and other tiny organisms was enticing, since he envisioned a career in dentistry or medicine.

However, he took a class on the field’s industrial applications, did some home beer-brewing to study fermentation — and was hooked.

“From there, I was headlong into food,” he said. Now, he’s at the corporate headquarters for the second-largest company in the world: Walmart.

After graduating with his biology bachelor’s degree, he got a job at Mother’s Brewing in quality assurance. He then joined a distillery/brewery in Montana. He’s from northwest Arkansas, and next went home to help open a brewery there.

“I decided I had peaked in the brewery industry, and wanted to go to bigger companies,” he said.

He tested pet foods and shelf-stable products at Simmons Foods, then directed safety and quality assurance for a niche poultry supplier. He became an expert at “producing science on demand for regulators or customers.”

He joined Walmart in 2022 as senior manager of supplier food safety. That included emergency recall conversations.

“We helped make sure we could handle recalls in minutes for all stores and customers,” he said.

Traw next moved to product and packaging claims: “For example, if something says ‘no artificial colors or flavors,’ we need to check.” This year, he moved into a new role as a senior manager with internal audit. “It’s broader than just food, but that’s still a part of it,” he said.

Outside of work, he’s a human dad, cat dad and cycling enthusiast. His partner Melody lives in Springfield, so he’s back often. He has lifelong friends from campus, like his Theta Chi fraternity brothers.

“When I was at Missouri State, I was able to get involved in professor-led research as an undergrad. I was a scientist, hands-on. I learned to have hard conversations. Like, when something we had used grant money for had failed, I had to tell my professor: Was it a wrong assumption or was it our execution — was it something we did wrong? I credit those opportunities for where I am today. The impact on me and my career was simply huge.”



National branding agency has more than 15 Bears on staff

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD I PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

Connections, a national food marketing agency, has a bushel of Bears at their table. The firm, formerly known as The Marlin Company, employs at least 18 Missouri State alums.

Bears hold roles ranging from creative directing and copywriting to digital strategy and business development.

The team specializes in business-to-business marketing for clients including PepsiCo Foodservice, The J.M. Smucker Co., Nestlé Professional Solutions, Dole Foodservice and more. Their advertising services promote food products served in restaurants, hotels and convenience stores.

Connections has two in-person locations: one office and creative studio just minutes from the Springfield campus, and another in Chicago with a full-service kitchen. Many team members also work remotely across the country. Bears have naturally become a key ingredient at Connections thanks to the university’s proximity to the firm’s Springfield location.

“I know that’s what attracted me,” Director of Campaign Strategy Megan Brammeier ’09 said. “I stayed in Springfield for five years post-graduation. I loved that I didn’t have to uproot to a much larger, more expensive city in order to work for a nationally recognized agency.”

Connections Vice President-Creative Director Dan Stewart ’88 also mentioned Missouri State’s reputation for skilled grads in all areas.

“We’ve got a talent pool where we can select some of the best. Missouri State grads have that work ethic we’re looking for,” Stewart said. “We keep them as long-term employees because it’s our culture.”

Dane Haugen ’19, ’20: **Works for one of North America’s largest food and beverage companies**

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN
PHOTO PROVIDED



Dane Haugen has both a bachelor’s degree in finance and an accelerated MBA from Mo State. Today, he’s global treasury manager of Kraft Heinz, a position that focuses heavily on treasury operations and cash management.

Haugen is responsible for bank accounts across the globe, debt management, safeguarding company cash and keeping an eye on cash forecasts versus actual numbers.

He helps ensure Kraft Heinz can make excess cash work for them while still meeting payment obligations, like quarterly dividends paid to shareholders.

“I didn’t set out wanting to work for a food company, but since joining Kraft Heinz I have taken a lot of pride in working for a company with a rich history of iconic brands,” Haugen said. “At its core, treasury may look the same from company to company, but there is definitely a unique flavor to the role when in the food space.”

Missouri State gave him the tools to get into this role, he said: “Course work in corporate finance and foreign exchange principles helped lay the foundation for a lot of what I do now.”



Madison Yohn ’19: **City marketing pro knows where to get the best cashew chicken, coffee**

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE S. ROSE I PHOTO PROVIDED

Food tells stories. It’s the job of Madison Yohn ’19 to share the unique stories of our regional cuisine as she invites people to Springfield. Yohn is the marketing content manager at Visit Springfield, the nonprofit that promotes tourism to the Queen City.

“Food is a huge part of Springfield travel and tourism,” she said. “We have one of the greatest food scenes around — you could eat cuisine from a different country for a month straight.”

She uses skills from her journalism and creative writing studies to craft blogs, post to social media and work on videos that showcase famed venues, hidden gems and trend-setting sites.

She helps run several “food trails,” in which participants download an app, then try to visit every venue that offers a certain type of food. There’s a popular coffee trail, but the most unique version may be the cashew chicken one. It includes restaurants that serve the traditional recipe, as well as twists like tacos, pizza, skewers and sandwiches.

Springfield-style cashew chicken, of course, is only one of our culinary claims to fame. Yohn also name-checked Pineapple Whip, Andy’s Frozen Custard and the booming scenes of Commercial Street and downtown.

“People are die-hard fans of cashew chicken,” she said. “We did a video series going to restaurants and interviewing notable Springfield people while they eat it. The episodes got more than a half a million views.”

She’ll keep shining a light on restaurants, owners and recipes.

“Everybody has to eat! People love going to new places and trying new things,” she said. “We’re there to help them uncover our claims to fame.”



TERI TRICKEY DISHES ABOUT FEEDING MO STATE

20+ years of Bear sauce, carrot cake and more



In academic year 2025-26, Trickey's team served **76,201 guests.**

THEY MADE:

4,430 cakes

12,160 cookies

500 pounds of Boomer Bites, a sweet and salty snack mix

8,160 rolls

2,935 pounds of chicken tenders

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN | PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

Teri Trickey, director of catering, has been with Missouri State since 2000, except for two years when she worked in Colorado. She oversees an average of more than 2,000 events a year. She's an employee of Chartwells Higher Education Dining Services, Missouri State's food-service provider.

Her team is small but mighty. They have one head chef, Scott Peggie, one cold prep cook, one pastry chef, one baker and one additional cook for the back of house. The front of house includes Jennifer Ramsey, who is the catering manager, three supervisors and 15-18 student employees.

The catering offices are in Plaster Student Union, but the culinary team works at Heitz Dining Center — which means food is constantly moving.

What are common challenges?

The week before classes start is crazy. Everyone's doing welcome banquets, the Ursa Experience (which brings new students to campus) is going on, there's graduate assistant training banquets, teacher assistant training and the faculty showcase. We also have students starting to move in. Sometimes we have difficulty getting our vehicles out of the loading dock!

Homecoming is also huge. Sometimes we have 25 events that day.

The other biggest challenge is Ozarks weather.

Do you use any products that come from Missouri State?

Not on a regular basis, but when things are in season, we do. The Mountain Grove campus has pears, apples, elderberries and blueberries. We use Mo State beef on occasion, especially for events at Darr Agricultural Center. We also pour Missouri State wines for some events.

What is the most popular cake flavor on campus?

Carrot cake. A close second is lemon sunshine.

Who developed the university's carrot cake recipe?

It was on campus before I came in 2000. Carol White was the baker at the time, and she developed and perfected that recipe. Other recipes that are part of our catering guides and custom menus are a combination of recipes from our corporate offices, and creations from our head catering chef and me.

For example, we developed a signature Mo State shortbread cookie that has maroon M&Ms, pecans, chocolate chips and craisins.

What was your biggest disaster?

Kathy Davis used to be in charge of academic advising. She's retired now. Every year at the end of their training, they would order a cake for folks who had finished the training.

One year we were very, very busy so I ran over in my car to get the cake. While I was loading my car, I put it on top. I got in my car. I drove off. I came back to PSU and realized, I don't have it.

I called our chef and said, "I left the cake on top of my car. Will you go outside and see if you can see it?" I thought maybe I got lucky and it slid off and didn't flip over.

He came back and was laughing. He said, "It's out in the middle of Cherry Street, and it's been run over about three times."

I called Kathy and was so nervous and said, "I am so sorry, but this is what happened." She just laughed and laughed and she was so gracious.

What is your favorite event to cater?

The emeriti dinner. I've been on campus for a long time. I have established a lot of relationships. Every year folks retire, but a lot of them come back for that dinner. I have the best time saying hello to people.

Who invented Bear sauce?

It was created by the company that was here before Chartwells, and a lot of those people stayed, so that recipe did, too.

Tell me about a dish you created to go along with a themed event.

We did an event for the Board of Trustees at Brick City, where the art students are located. We themed the desserts. I call them painter's palette cookies. It's a square shortbread cookie and it's iced so it looks like it's been hit with paint splatters. We did cake pops that looked like brushes with paint dripping off of them.

Share some Mo State food secrets.

I like a cookie that's crunchy on the outside and soft and gooey on the inside. The tip is to always use cold butter, even though almost every recipe says soften your butter first.

Also, everyone loves our maple balsamic salad dressing. You can make that at home by purchasing your favorite balsamic dressing, then put in a little maple syrup and shake it.

SNIFF · SAMPLE · SAVOR
FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

The Hospitality Leadership Wine Tasting and Silent Auction has been a fixture for almost 15 years. All proceeds support students.

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE S. ROSE | PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

A student dressed in maroon poured a West Coast wine of nearly the same color, describing it as "velvety with dark fruit notes."

The eight guests at the table were also served a creamy bruschetta.

This was one of many pairings at the 14th annual Hospitality Leadership Wine Tasting Event and Silent Auction.

The April event raises money for scholarships, but Bears benefit beyond financial support.

Everything, from creating centerpieces to hand-tying every ribbon around every menu, is done by students from an event planning course. Beverage operations students memorize facts about the wines and serve guests.

"Having the students involved is fairly new," said faculty organizer and alumnus Matt Bekebrede. "It really enhanced the event. The people attending appreciate seeing them, since they are the reason we're raising money."

THE FIRST SIPS: SWIRLING THE CROWD TOGETHER

Guests entered the Bond Learning Center at the Darr Agricultural Center. Sparkling wine bubbled as they mingled.

Drs. Jerry and Julie Masterson, both faculty emeriti, came to the event with their daughter Dr. Caitlin Masterson '14, an assistant professor at the RStats Institute.

"We've been going since the inaugural event," Jerry said. "We wouldn't miss it." Caitlin has joined them for at least four years. "Once," he said, "we won a trip to California!"

They're wine lovers, and glad to help students. In fact, Bekebrede was once Jerry's student.

"Matt brings years of experience to this," Julie said. "Our students are blessed to have his connections and business expertise."

Steve Dobbs '92 has also attended every year. He's a long-time member of the Hospitality Leadership Board of Advisors, and is the director of national accounts at SGC Foodservice.

"I like to show the students support from alumni," Dobbs said. "It's great to see what they are capable of in every way."

THE MAIN EVENT: UNCORKING BEVERAGES AND BIDS

The guests next moved into the main room. Tables ringed the large space, stacked with items for the silent auction. A tent offered beer from alumni-owned 4by4 Brewing Company.

Auction items included wine and wine tastings (of course), spirits, food, cooking items, hotel packages, restaurant gift cards, rounds of golf, tickets to St. Louis Cardinals baseball games and attractions like Silver Dollar City, jewelry, a fire pit and more.

"Thank you for being here," Bekebrede said when introducing the auction. "Have a great time, bid often and bid high!"

2026 was the 14TH ANNUAL EVENT

Over 14 years, the event has raised
$200,000+

This year, before expenses, it raised about
$21,000

The Hospitality Leadership Board of Advisors Scholarship fund contributes
$10,000
in scholarships each year.

One student receives
$2,000.

Eight students receive
$1,000 EACH.

EVENT SPONSORS

- Kollmeyer & Co CPAs
- O'Reilly Hospitality Management
- Superior Linen
- 4by4 Brewing Company
- Vino Cellars



Students pour samples for diners at the 2026 wine-tasting event. It was held at the Darr Agricultural Center.

THE SMOOTH FINISH: THIS YEAR'S VINTAGE, DONE

The students poured and placed, discussed and decanted.

"A lot of time went into this," said senior Zoey Miller, one of the two main student planners. "I'm so excited to see it come to life, and see everyone happy."

Later that spring, she parlayed her new bachelor's degree in hospitality management to a job as a sales coordinator with O'Reilly Hospitality Management.

Erin White, also a senior, was the other main planner. She's been working for the Marriott hotel chain.

"I'm eternally grateful to learn what it takes to plan and run an event like this," said White, "even dealing with the financials and last-minute changes."

Missouri State offers students so many opportunities in hospitality, Bekebrede said.

"The personalities, people and relationships you can form are important," he said. "I love working with the students, seeing them mature, grow and become a passionate professional in the industry."



The alum behind the event:
Matt Bekebrede '04, '23

Matt Bekebrede is a bachelor's and master's degree alumnus, full-time faculty member at Missouri State and the owner of Vino Cellars.

"I've been in the restaurant business since I was 14 — my mom and stepdad opened a restaurant in Waynesville, where I grew up," he said. "I waited tables, cooked, did a bit of everything."

When he started college at a different school, he planned to be a kindergarten teacher. But "the restaurant industry is addictive, and I had caught the bug."

He transferred to Missouri State, where he studied hospitality management while also managing a local restaurant.

After graduation, he worked at Chateau on the Lake and Millwood Golf & Racquet Club.

In 2007, he opened his own business: Vino Cellars. It's more than a wine shop, with a lounge, a brunch series, live music, classes and pairing dinners.

"I love wine because each bottle, vineyard and producer has a story," he said. "It's a conversational, communal drink — it brings people together."

He stayed involved with his alma mater, serving on the Hospitality Leadership Board of Advisors from 2005-20. He started teaching per course in 2020. By 2021, he had a full-time position.

"I found my home at Missouri State," he said, and so did family members: His wife Stephana is also a Bear, earning a master's degree in teaching in 2024.

Now, his daughter Carleigh is a child development major. Son Brody starts next year.

MORE MO STATE TRADITIONS



PRESIDENT'S FINALS BREAKFAST

When else can you get a pancake from the president? This tradition helps students during their busy finals week. Mo State leaders serve free breakfast food in a dining center to any Bear who needs to energize and relax.



TOUR OF THE GLOBE

This annual event showcases food, music, games, fun and dance from the 90+ countries represented by students on campus. Bears transform classrooms and hallways into showcases of their diverse cultures.

You're invited to the 2026 event
What: Tour of the Globe: Passport to Play
When: 5:30-8 p.m. Nov. 6
Where: Jim D. Morris Center, 301 S. Jefferson Ave.
Cost: Free and open to the public



RARE WINE, RARE BOOKS

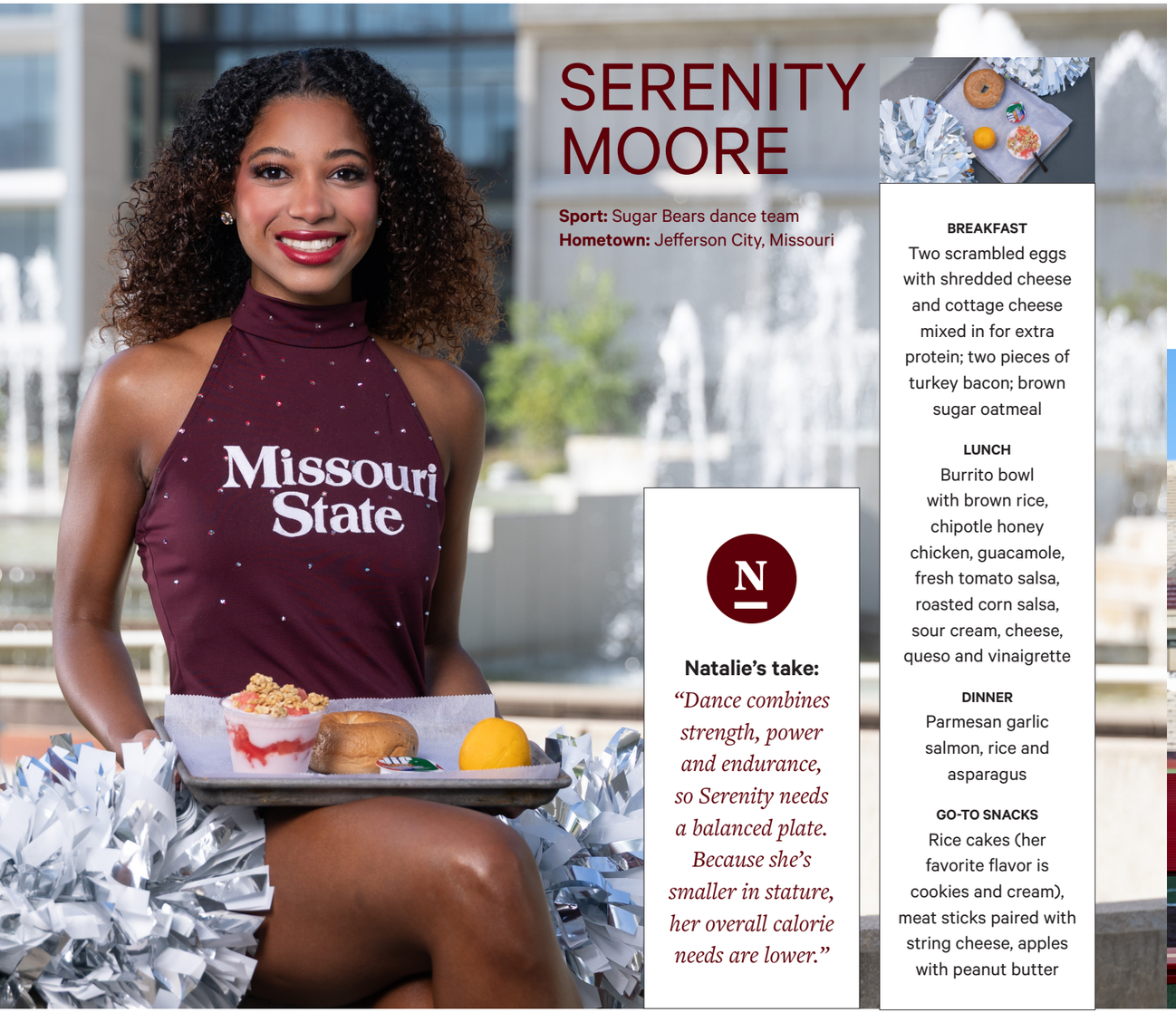
This July marked the 15-year anniversary of this summer event at the Duane G. Meyer Library. It includes discussion of the library's special collections and archives, fine wines and a full-course dinner. Proceeds from this fundraiser go to the library's Fraley Family Rare Books Endowment.

EAT LIKE A BEAR

What's the real breakfast of champions? What does a day of eating look like for dancing, scoring goals, completing laps in the pool or protecting a quarterback? We asked four Mo State student-athletes what they eat in a day to find out what fuels their bodies and brains.

Thanks to Blair-Shannon and Garst dining centers for providing food for our photos!

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD | PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE



SERENITY MOORE

Sport: Sugar Bears dance team
Hometown: Jefferson City, Missouri

BREAKFAST
Two scrambled eggs with shredded cheese and cottage cheese mixed in for extra protein; two pieces of turkey bacon; brown sugar oatmeal

LUNCH
Burrito bowl with brown rice, chipotle honey chicken, guacamole, fresh tomato salsa, roasted corn salsa, sour cream, cheese, queso and vinaigrette

DINNER
Parmesan garlic salmon, rice and asparagus

GO-TO SNACKS
Rice cakes (her favorite flavor is cookies and cream), meat sticks paired with string cheese, apples with peanut butter

Natalie's take:
"Dance combines strength, power and endurance, so Serenity needs a balanced plate. Because she's smaller in stature, her overall calorie needs are lower."



Mo State student-athletes get assistance building their nutrition plans from Natalie Allen, Missouri State's team dietitian.

"I love my job because I get to help every athlete," Allen said.

She's also a clinical professor of dietetics.

"Every athlete's plate looks different," she said. "I consider their body size, sport, training, goals and food preferences. My favorite reminder is that all foods can fit — fuel with nutritious foods most of the time, but have a cookie now and then, too."

ISAIAH VILLANUEVA

Sport: Football, offensive lineman | **Hometown:** Katy, Texas



Natalie's take:
"Bigger athletes generally need more calories. Isaiah needs to be quick and powerful, so we prioritize protein to help build and maintain the muscle he needs to do his job on the line."

BREAKFAST
Apple, banana, nutrition bar, orange juice, protein shake

LUNCH
Garst dining hall grill/wok station rice bowl: double chicken, rice, beans and veggies; six-inch sandwich with turkey and chicken

AFTERNOON SNACK
Greek yogurt with granola; handful of almonds

DINNER
Chicken pasta (large portion)

EVENING SNACK
Protein shake; two slices of toast with peanut butter



HUGO JINKINSON

Sport: Soccer, defender | **Hometown:** Leicester, England



Natalie's take:
"Soccer combines endurance with repeated bursts of speed, so carbohydrates and protein are both important. Because games are often played in the heat, hydration and electrolytes are a big focus for Hugo. He's also from England, so he puts a cultural spin on breakfast by adding beans."



BREAKFAST
Oatmeal with protein powder, peanut butter and jam

MIDDAY
Eggs on toast with baked beans and potatoes

LATE AFTERNOON
Chicken with green beans and rice

DINNER
Beef with mushrooms, onions and cream cheese; two baked sweet potatoes

THE STUDENT-ATHLETES: HERE'S HOW YOU FUEL AN APPETITE TO WIN



Natalie's take:
"Swimmers can burn more calories per kilogram than any other team. They may swim 10,000 yards in a day, so Kenzie loads up on carbohydrates and consistently refuels throughout the day to keep her energy up."

KENZIE KURRE

Sport: Swimming | **Hometown:** Savannah, Missouri



PRE-PRACTICE
Peanut butter chocolate chip protein bar

BREAKFAST
Homemade smoothie bowl with frozen mango, orange juice and vanilla Greek yogurt topped with protein granola and chocolate chips

SNACK
Apple with peanut butter; energy drink

LUNCH
Burrito bowl: brown rice, black beans, chipotle honey chicken, fresh tomato salsa, corn salsa, queso, sour cream, shredded cheese, lettuce and vinaigrette; side of chips

POST-WORKOUT SNACK
Protein shake; beef stick; ranch-flavored rice cakes

DINNER
Homemade chicken teriyaki with stir-fry veggies and rice

EVENING SNACK WITH ROOMMATES
Small treat from Andy's — her go-to is a chocolate concrete with Oreos and M&Ms

FIGHTING THE ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER:

FOOD TIES INTO OUR MISSION

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN



PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

THE BEAR PANTRY BATTLES FOOD INSECURITY ON CAMPUS

Alex B. Johnson, director of the Center for Community Engagement, has seen the Bear Pantry move from a small closet to a large hub in Plaster Student Union.

The Bear Pantry helps alleviate hunger and poverty. It's open to all students, staff and faculty. It has experienced tremendous growth since its start in 2019. For example, in academic year 2025-26, the Bear Pantry:

- Distributed 85,000 pounds of food and hygiene items.
- Served more than 1,300 households.
- Recorded about 13,000 visits.

"The Bear Pantry has been shaped by students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, community organizations and volunteers who saw a need and chose to be part of the solution," Johnson said.

It's a network partner of Ozarks Food Harvest, he said, and has relationships with community organizations. Its new central campus location makes it more visible and accessible. Some of its campus partners include:

- Dietetic students and faculty-led Teaching Kitchen programs that include nutrition education.
- Darr College of Agriculture and the College of Natural and Applied Sciences. These colleges have expanded the pantry's access to fresh produce through hydroponics and campus-grown food initiatives.
- The Campus Garden, which donates produce to the shelves.

The Bear Pantry also helped pilot a program called Bears Share. It redirects food left over from events, like a banquet, to members of the campus community.

"What has been most rewarding," Johnson said, "is watching the Bear Pantry evolve into a living example of Missouri State's public affairs mission."


PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE


Cassie Hanson


Bart Brown

ALUMNI LEAD, WORK AND VOLUNTEER AT FOOD BANK

Hunger. It's a serious problem in southwest Missouri. In fact, it affects one in four children and one in five adults in the region.

Some Bears dedicate their lives to helping — people like Bart Brown '88, president and CEO of Ozarks Food Harvest, and Cassie Hanson '08 & '09, director of development. In fact, six members of their executive leadership team are Bears.

Ozarks Food Harvest is the Feeding America food bank for southwest Missouri. It serves 90,000 people a month — that's 23 million meals a year — through a network of community- and faith-based charities.

The food bank accepts, processes, warehouses and distributes food and supplies to pantries, kitchens and shelters across 28 counties.

They are facing an urgent crisis. Food insecurity rates in the region have reached a 10-year high, said Hanson.

But Bears are there to help. More than 3,900 people volunteer at OFH each year. Many of them are Missouri State students and alumni.

Brown has been with the food bank for nearly three decades.

His foray into the nonprofit world was unusual. He was formerly a KSMU announcer, and about 28 years ago he taught business communications at a junior college. He gave students this advice: Go interview with an organization where they didn't want to work, so they would feel less pressure. He would do the same, and they'd discuss their experiences. He did his interview at OFH. He was shocked by the scope of the problem.

"I couldn't get it out of my head, and I thought my professional experience with media and communication could make a difference," Brown said. "I haven't looked back."

For Hanson, the food bank was an opportunity to use data in a meaningful way. As a student, she worked for the College of Education's Institute for School Improvement. She was an editorial assistant of a research journal, and learned how to turn data into compelling stories. She also has a Missouri State MBA.

"When I saw the opening for a database coordinator and grant writer, I knew it was the perfect fit," Hanson said. "I've always been motivated and fulfilled by work that gives back to the community."

CAMPUS GARDEN PUTS GREEN THUMBS TO GOOD USE

The Campus Garden at Missouri State took root in 2011. It grew out of the Sustainability Commission, a student-led group. Now, students grow crops each year on a plot near Grand Street. Here's how it works:

- Local company Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds donates seeds, and students work in the Karls Hall greenhouse to get the seeds started.
- After the plants are in the ground, volunteers work in the gardens. Some are community members, although the lion's share are students. Some Bears even earn class credit or service-learning hours for their work. Many students from the Darr College of Agriculture help in the beds. Sororities have pitched in, and student-athletes on scholarships can fulfill some of their required volunteer hours by digging in the dirt.
- Members of the neighborhood collect eggshells or food scraps for compost.
- The university groundskeeping team collects fall leaves, grinds them up and delivers them to the gardens, which can be used in compost.

Continued on page 36


PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

Continued from page 35

- When the produce is at its best, it's harvested and donated to the Bear Pantry on campus. Last year, the garden provided 899 pounds of produce to the pantry.

What doesn't get used by Bears is parceled out to community fridges around Springfield, said Mariah Johnson, garden manager.

"We couldn't do it without everyone's help," Johnson said.

Johnson and Ember Piersee, the garden's community engagement manager, are working on a cookbook for people who use the Bear Pantry. The recipes will center on produce and herbs grown in the garden. They also have a guide to drying herbs.

"That was a nice way for us to collab," Piersee said.

They are also trying to cultivate the next generation to lead the garden. They appear at orientation events.

"We had a few hundred people come through who were new to campus, and we made different flavored waters with produce we grew out in the garden. We had some mint waters, some cucumber water," Piersee said.

In off-season, the garden hosts events like carving pumpkins or making scarecrows or jewelry.

"We need as many hands as we can get," Johnson said. "I want to emphasize that this is student-run, so it goes from students back to students, faculty and staff."


PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE


PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE



Meet a **GOLDEN BEAR** *Graduated 50 or more years ago!*

A career ranging from frozen food to hot coffee

MICHAEL J. DUGGAN

Missouri State degree:
Bachelor's in marketing and management, 1974

Career: Long history in sales, distribution and management for the food service industry. This industry includes places people eat away from home, like nursing homes, restaurants, hospitals and school districts. His first job was with Dow Chemical (not food-related). Next, he worked for Craig Foodservice Distributing in Salem, Missouri. The Kraft Heinz Company purchased Craig in 1986; he became president of food service in Los Angeles. In 1990, he came back to the Midwest to work for family-owned Dot Foods, now North America's largest food industry redistributor. Duggan started the frozen and refrigerated business with the Tracy family. He retired from Dot in 2012. He is now CEO of Dubuque Coffee Company.

Family: Wife Susie (Wagner) Duggan (also a Bear!) retired as head of special education for Eureka High School. Their sons all work for food companies: Patrick (a Bear!) is the national account manager for Tyson Chicken. Matt (a Bear!) is director of operations for four distribution centers in the Southeast United States at Dot. Timothy is the vice president of retail sales for Dot.

Lives in: Marthasville, Missouri, on a small farm.

A few Mo State leadership roles:

- Selected in 2004 to present our case to the Missouri Senate Committee on Education in favor of name change to Missouri State University.
- Missouri State University Board of Governors, two terms from 2002-10; chaired the board in 2008.
- Missouri State University Foundation Board of Trustees, 2019-26.
- Founders Club silver medallion for financial support across campus, including athletics, scholarships, Sigma Phi Epsilon, ROTC, Ducks Unlimited and the unrestricted fund. "Donations to that fund are very important," he said, "as the university needs those many times for emergency working capital."
- Established the Duggan Endowed Fund to benefit students pursuing a degree in the College of Business. Susie started an endowed fund this year in the College of Education.

How did Missouri State set you up for success?

I had three significant mentors. One was then the vice president of student affairs, Tom Wyrick. I worked closely with him on student government and Interfraternity Council. Another was John Ashcroft, with whom I worked on student activity legal affairs as president of the Mid-America Interfraternity Conference. The last was John Whittington, the alumni president of my fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon. I spent a lot of time with them in school and away from school. They each taught me about professionalism, strategic planning and organization.

You are still involved with Sig Ep, mentoring students and addressing mental health issues. Tell us about that.

Mental health issues and suicides are up in young men today. They may not know how to develop good relationships, or have pressures related to college, money and socializing. I work with students to make sure they know there's someone there for them and tell them about resources that are available and options. We need to erase their thoughts that they are failures just because they have challenges.

You also give back to Mo State financially. Why is that?

My mother was a widow, and I had two young sisters. So along with all my activities, I had three jobs in school, all four years. I was with Town & County clothing. I worked for the law firm of Smith, Askinosie and Fiorella. I had classes in the morning and went to the law office in the afternoon. My third job was refereeing intramural sports.

I know firsthand there are students who need financial help. If you can give back to the university, you may help them get through school when they or their family can't pay bills. I have even asked students, "Did you go to the financial aid office? No? I am coming down there." I walk them over to make sure they know all their options!

Continued on page 39

10+ FOODS, BEVERAGES NAMED FOR MO STATE

We're eating humble pie to be so honored. Here are just some of the dishes and drinks we've found with a university tie.

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN



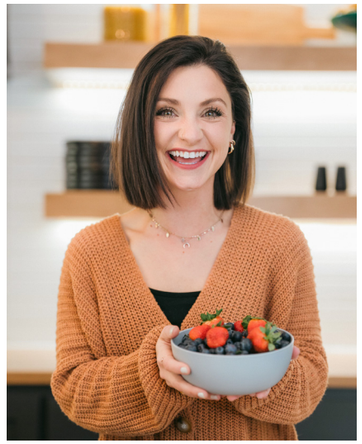
- **Mo State Beef Sliders** at Vino Cellars. The sliders are made with beef from the Darr College of Agriculture, served on a brioche bun with cheese and house-made aioli.
- **The MSU Fried Roll** at Niji Sushi Bar & Grill features yellowtail, crab and cream cheese. It's fried then topped with spicy mayo.
- **Boomer Bear Concrete** from Andy's Frozen Custard blends vanilla custard with strawberries, almonds and a Heath bar. It's been on the menu since 2009.
- Mudhouse coffee shop has a Lotus Power Up drink named the **Cherry "Bear-y"** for its maroon-ish color.
- **The Boomer Bear** is a raspberry and white chocolate latte available at all three locations of Travellers House Coffee & Tea.
- **The Bear Hug** at Gailey's Breakfast Café on Walnut Street is a platter with biscuits and gravy served with two eggs, potatoes and a pork side. It's an homage to Mo State: Two of Gailey's owners attended the university.
- **The Sugar Bear** at Big Whiskey's locations is a signature cocktail featuring a blend of coconut rum, melon and banana liqueurs, sweet and sour mix, pineapple and orange juices and a splash of club soda. It's named for the dance team and has been on the menu since 2006 when several Sugar Bears worked at the restaurant. The drink was created in their honor.
- **The VandiRoar cocktail** at The Order inside Hotel Vandivort celebrates Mo State Athletics. It's maroon and white with a sweet and tart finish.
- **The bear pie** at McSalty's Pizza Café features Canadian bacon, Italian sausage, mushrooms, onions, green peppers and black olives.
- Shot Shack downtown offers city-themed drinks like **the Boomer and Growl**.
- **Mo State American Lager,** by Mother's Brewing Co., was billed as "a brew as bold as your Bear pride" when it was released in 2024. It's available at campus athletic and entertainment venues.
- Anheuser-Busch has released limited-edition maroon **Bud Light cans featuring the Bears logo**. These 24-packs help support Mo State athletics and are distributed by Wil Fischer.
- Boulevard Brewing Co., founded in Kansas City, created the **Wild Cherry Charge flavor of Quirk Hard Seltzer** in partnership with Mo State, featuring a Bear head on the can. It's a fruity hard seltzer with a hint of lime. Fun fact: Several of our alumni have worked or work in the graphic design department and design the beverage labels.

HAVE A MO STATE FOOD TO ADD TO THIS LIST?

EMAIL US!

Brand@MissouriState.edu

THE DIETITIAN: LINKING FOOD TO HOW YOU FEEL



WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN
PHOTO PROVIDED

NUTRITION EXPERT WHIPS UP HEALTHY-GUT ADVICE FOR THOUSANDS OF FOLLOWERS

Brittany Carpenter '12 is passionate about nutrition and gut health, and used that enthusiasm to build a strong online following.

Carpenter graduated from Missouri State with a bachelor's degree in dietetics. She then worked for corporate food companies and Cox College, and pursued a master's degree in functional medicine.

"I loved my time at Mo State," Carpenter said. "The faculty there made learning so fun. That is where I learned the backbone of everything I teach now. Even when I'm addressing extreme gut issues, we still use food to heal."

Today, Carpenter has an online practice focused on reversing Irritable Bowel Syndrome-like symptoms in women. "Dietitian Brittany" on Instagram is nearing 50,000 followers.

The one food group she recommends people add to their diet? Fiber.

"Hands down," she said. "If all you do is focus on getting 25 grams of fiber in your day with whole foods, your entire metabolic and digestive health will change for the better."



Mike Duggan is among the 70+ Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity members pictured in the 1974 Ozarko. He was involved in the group on a national level, and maintains those connections.

Continued from page 37

How did you start working in food?

At Dow, I was selling a synthetic rubber. People would say, "I love the product. We're going to buy it in three years." I was selling future chemistry projects. I wanted something more short-term.

A fraternity brother married a girl whose family owned Craig Distributing, a food service distributor firm. I went to their wedding and met the owners. They offered me a job back in Missouri where my friends and family were.

I liked being able to walk in and show someone a food product, then have them say immediately, "We like this; we're going to put it on our menu. Send us five cases."

Your family has a long history with Dot Foods.

Yes, I retired from there in 2012 after more than 22 years, and two of my sons still work there. In 1989, Dot was only involved with dry foods. They asked me to start a frozen division, and I became general manager of Arctic Frozen Foods. We got to $95 million in three years and were profitable in the third year. Today it's a multibillion-dollar business known all over the country with products in Walmart, Target, CVS, RiteAid, Walgreens and hundreds of food-service distributors like Springfield Grocers and Sysco. Dot is still family owned.

You're not quite out of the food business yet. Tell us about your coffee venture.

Dubuque Coffee Company has numerous partners, some of whom are Sig Eps from Missouri State. They got involved before I did. When COVID hit, they needed help, so they called me. I came out of retirement. It's now a profitable company. We sell to a lot of businesses in Springfield and Missouri. Our customers include Bass Pro Shop restaurants and Big Cedar Lodge, Schnucks, Dierbergs and Hy-Vee, as well as hundreds of customers in 36 states.

It's been interesting for a guy who didn't drink coffee — but I do now! I have a cup every morning with my wife, so I can look customers in the eye and tell them it's the best coffee I have ever tasted.

What do you do for fun?

Susie and I travel quite a bit. Our goal was to get to all 50 states, around Europe and go to as many national parks as we can.

We have been to two NFL Super Bowls, one NBA Championship, one NCAA Final Four, three St. Louis Cardinals World Series and two MLB All-Star games.

We've been to Vegas for the National Rodeo Finals and seeing the Zac Brown Band at the Sphere, where we figured out the couple next to us was from St. Louis! Coming up, we're seeing the Eagles at the Sphere. We also went back to Yellowstone with friends this August.

I also enjoy hunting and fishing with my sons in places around the country.

You've hired a lot of grads. What does being a Bear mean to you?

Last night, I tried to figure out how many — it's been close to 37 grads so far I can remember through the years. I just can't imagine that all colleges are like Missouri State, with so many engaging characters, students, faculty and staff. Missouri State is really a very special place that people enjoy coming back to often. Go Bears!

- Interview by Michelle S. Rose

Missouri State
DIVISION for UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
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Bears, mark your calendars for paws-ibly the best Homecoming ever!

Nov. 13-14







Alumni and friends: You are invited to Homecoming week events surrounding the grand opening of the University Advancement Center, your new home on campus.

2 p.m. | Nov. 11

Ribbon cutting and remarks followed by an open house

6 p.m. | Nov. 13

IT'S TIME FOR THE

BEAR NATION CELEBRATION

The ultimate Homecoming eve party!

WELCOME HOME
MISSOURI STATE HOMECOMING
2026

View all events, get football game tickets, sign up for reunions and more: MissouriState.edu/Homecoming