

All Eyes On: Bill Severson

Alumnus returns to Truman to share his knowledge

BY BLAISE HART-SCHMIDT
Features Editor
index.featureseditor@gmail.com

Alumnus Bill Severson said his tombstone might read: "Here lies a teacher."

Severson has taught for almost 50 years and counting since he graduated from what was then Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, and said his tombstone will be simple.

"I believe that when you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, you'll never work another day in your life, and for me that's teaching," he said.

Severson earned his B.S. in education and B.A. in history in 1965, and continued on to earn his Master's degree. He taught for several years before becoming the Corporate Director of Executive Recruiting for the May Department Stores Co., until Macy's bought it in 2006. He then founded the Severson Consulting Group, a com-

pany helping those in job and career transitions. He currently teaches at Lindenwood University in St. Charles.

Severson returned to Kirksville this past weekend to teach current and former members of his fraternity, Sigma Tau Gamma, about important ways to land and keep meaningful employment. Standing in the front of the fraternity's chapter room, Severson gave the group tips on résumés, interviewing, marketing and creative thinking.

Networking, he said, is an important part of college, which he hopes members of Sig Tau appreciate. Severson said his fraternity brother Keith Dinsmore, also a 1965 Sig Tau graduate, brought him back to Kirksville, and said relationships like theirs are important.

"[Sigma Tau Gamma members'] affiliation with the organization doesn't end in May when they graduate," he said. "It goes on as Keith and I have done for 50 years."

Dinsmore said he was excited to be able to see his friend again, calling the speech a "treat," and a "win-win all around." He said he could remember still Severson from their college days together.

"When you meet people in college, you kind of pick people out, and you think, 'Wow, that guy's really smart, you know,'" Dinsmore said. "He was always somebody who was always very mindful and smart and had an intellectual curiosity about him."

Severson's teaching isn't only confined to classrooms and fraternity houses, however. As a

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alumnus



Photo submitted by Keith Dinsmore
Former Truman president Walt Ryle speaks with alumnus Bill Severson before his speech at the Sig Tau fraternity house Saturday.

father of five children, Severson coached his daughters' fast pitch softball team for 10 years, and many of the team members went on to earn athletic scholarships for college.

Former Truman professor and

Severson's mentor Walter Ryle IV introduced him at the event.

"What do you call a brother like Bill Severson?" Ryle asked. "He is a brother we can look to with pride and feel very privileged to have him with us this afternoon."

Communication key to car care

BY KATHLEEN BARBOSA
Staff Reporter

While returning from a service trip to the Smoky Mountains during Midterm Break, sophomore Nathan Drake's 2002 Outback Subaru started making noises.

Drake pulled over his car at a Subaru dealership in Harriman, Tenn. Drake and four passengers waited while a mechanic assessed the damage. He said the car could not be driven without fixing the damage. The repair would take four days and cost \$1,000.

Incidents of car trouble like Drake's are common as the winter snow melts into spring. Brian Miller, owner of Complete Automotive Repair Service, is a third generation body man. He said the best thing drivers can do to keep vehicles in working order throughout all seasons is to practice responsible, preventive maintenance.

Miller said communicating regularly with a shop about the vehicle is the most important thing a driver should do to maintain the vehicle.

"Communication is number one with your shop," Miller said. "It's no different than a doctor."

Drake's car was past preventive maintenance. To get back to Truman, freshman Lauren Manley, a passenger, had her parents drive from Kansas City with two cars and a flat bed trailer to Ten-

nessee and took the students back to Kirksville.

"They just loaded the car up and said, 'Lets go,' and drove all the way back too," Drake said. "They spent 24 hours straight in the cars."

While Miller said he works on structural and cosmetic aspects, he mainly does mechanic work and repairs that could have been prevented.

Miller said taking preventive maintenance is the main way to stop problems and seasonal issues with vehicles before they start. Miller's shop is gearing up to start offering free pre-inspections, so that

customers can know what is wrong with their car and repair it instead of failing the inspections.

"We're going to allow people to come to us first, and we will inspect their vehicle basically the same way the inspection will," Miller said. "We just can't give them a sticker and if we run across anything like ball joints, brakes, anything like that, we can go ahead and set up a time and schedule them in get it fixed."

For junior Victor DeMarco car trouble began when he took his car to be inspected during Midterm Break. DeMarco had been driving his 1999 truck for almost six years.

"I went and got it inspected, and it failed the inspection," DeMarco said. "I had to get upper and lower ball joints replaced, my driver side tie rod and I had a tail light out, and it totaled to

about 800 bucks to fix."

DeMarco said if he had chosen to have it fixed in the same shop in which the car was inspected, it would have cost him \$1,300 to fix. Instead, he took the car home to Kansas City to a mechanic his family has been using for years.

Weather has had an effect on the truck too. DeMarco said that during the winter, the power steering in his truck tends to make weird noises. He's had the steering system looked at but the mechanics couldn't find anything wrong. The strange noises in the steering only occur when the weather is cold.

"When its cold outside, my power steering had a really loud 'err' sound whenever I turn and it does it all the time, [in] the winter when it's cold," DeMarco said.

Miller said the shop has seen a lot of weather-caused cases. Problems with thermostats, heating cords and transmissions are all common during winter. In the summer common problems include thermostats, blown head gaskets, intake problems, air conditioning and brakes.

"Brakes are really important because if a person will catch it in time, they don't have to replace all the routers and calipers, and they can save a lot of money," Miller said.

Miller stressed the importance of finding a shop that is trustworthy and keeping up with car maintenance.

"Find a shop they like," Miller said. "There's a lot to choose from here in Kirksville, find one that they get along with."

He said he highly recommends replacing the transmission fluid every other time the motor oil is changed, something that rarely is practiced, he said.

Students investigate farm animals' insides

BY JESSICA SCHEETZ
For the Index

Myrna Bradley, fifth grade teacher at La Plata Elementary, smiled as she put on a glove and reached into the dark hole. Liquid oozed and gurgled as Bradley extended further into the sloshy pit. Her face slightly scrunched from the unforgettable smell.

"It was different," she said. "I've been on a farm for 30 years, and I've never been able to do that."

After grabbing a handful of partially digested grasses and corn, she turned around to show her

lot of kids don't get to come up close to a large animal like that and actually get to see what the inside of a cow is like, and it's a pretty good experience for them."

Kathleen Keough, a junior agricultural science major and a coordinator for the event, said the hands-on activities can help students later on with concepts they learn in classes.

"When they go back and talk about science and bacteria, they can think about Bubba and how Bubba digests his bacteria," she said. "They have that visual to help them in the classroom."

Students also participated in a seed and germination exercise, where students planted a pumpkin seed and learned about

like that and that the only thing you were going to feel was the feed and the top of his backbone and stuff, so it was cool."

University Farm Manager Bill Kuntz said Bubba is an important tool for students to understand animals and their digestive functions.

"We've done research projects with him, but in an educational realm, as far as educating college students in courses and also the field trips with elementary and high school kids, they get to get a hands-on experience with that, and that's pretty priceless," he said. "A

lot of kids don't get to come up close to a large animal like that and actually get to see what the inside of a cow is like, and it's a pretty good experience for them."

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what seeds need to grow.

Michael Seipel, professor and agricultural science department chair, said the activity is important for students who do not necessarily have an agricultural background.

"I think it's surprising today, even in a rural area, how little contact most people have with — kids in particular — food production and with the farm environment," he said. "Some families do garden, but they're not a majority by any means. So this is a chance for them to see what goes on."

Other events for students included learning how to take care of a horse and the importance of composting.

The event is in conjunction with National Agriculture Week. The week focuses on making the community more conscientious of how agriculture affects them on a day-to-day basis, Kuntz said.

"I think it's just making people aware of agriculture in general," he said. "Like the sign I have up here says, 'If you eat, you're involved with agriculture.' Most people don't think that going to the store and buying food is being involved in agriculture, but it is."

People should not let misconceptions about agriculture fool them, because it is about much more than that, Kuntz said.

"Ag isn't just a bunch of rednecks out running around," he said. "Everybody that is living is involved in it, and it's nice to be aware of where everything comes from."

(Additional reporting by Lauren Brimer)

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