A Favorite Has Retired

By Melody Galen

What to do, what to do? Fortunately for Associate Professor Emeritus Michael Porter, that’s not a question he struggles to answer. His difficulty lies more in fitting it all in.

After 35 years of teaching at MU, Porter has done the one thing that allows him to have time for all those extra-curricular activities he loves so much. He up and retired this past June.

Retirees often have at least a few moments of regret over the loss of their work lives and the free-fall feeling of having the freedom to reinvent themselves. Porter, as might be expected, has simply flung himself wholeheartedly into doing what he enjoys.

The festivities began in April with the launch of a fundraising campaign to endow the Michael J. Porter Chair’s Enhancement Fund, followed by the announcement of his retirement and the dedication of a bench he and his wife, Rose, donated to the university.

But the wide world calls, and the Porters have travel plans—some involving friends, some involving grandkids, and some for just themselves. Whether on the road or at home in Columbia, Porter is likely to have a camera around his neck. Photography is a hobby he’s enjoyed for years, and he’s delighted to have more time to devote to it. “I’ve been very involved with my photography,” he says. “I have two photos in an art show at the Columbia Art League, and another piece over at Orr Street Studios.”

He’s also had more time for exercise and catching up on his book list. “I’m reading a lot,” Porter says. “And that’s really nice. I’m able to work in my yard—I could be in my yard every day.

With his retirement, Porter ended a four-year stint as department chair. He told the faculty at his going-away lunch that he had really enjoyed, as chair, being able to say “Yes,” when they needed something. “You want to create that course? Sure! You need a microphone for your class? Sure,” he says. “Not that I was a pushover, but I thought it was good to know that I was able to improve their lives.”

In September, he wrapped up a year’s worth of duty as a tri-chair for the university’s 175th anniversary celebration. He has already done a presentation this fall on how to be successful for the iCOM undergraduate student organization, and he plans to stay connected to MU. One way he’ll do that is by tickling the ivories at the MU Retirees Association breakfasts once a month. When Rose was president of MURA, she asked him to play piano for them, and he kept on doing it. “Now I’m one of them! These are my people!” he says with a big laugh.

Over the course of his career, Porter earned several prestigious teaching awards such as the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Education and the William T. Kemper Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching, but he might be pretty pleased now to be recognized for something new—maybe along the lines of “Best in Show” at the Columbia Art League. He’s surely earned the time to do whatever tickles his fancy.

“I have a list a mile long, and I am greatly enjoying it!”

While he confesses not to miss having to prepare classroom and lecture material, he does miss the constant interaction with his students. “I think my strength was in the lecture, and I think it’s because I’m high energy,” he says. “I really genuinely looked forward to teaching class.”
Dear Alums, friends and colleagues:

On June 1, 2014, I was honored to become chair of the Department of Communication. Fortunately, Michael Porter’s retirement from the chair’s office was actually just a relocation to the third floor of Switzler Hall where now, as an emeritus faculty member, he enjoys a “penthouse” office. We’re all very grateful for his leadership as chair, including overseeing the reconstruction of Switzler Hall and planning the entire department’s return to our wonderful new home, a revamping of our undergraduate curriculum, and also the establishment of our Alumni Advisory Council. Michael advanced the department in many positive ways, and we’re very glad that he’s still around. We often hear his voice and laughter throughout the building and can’t imagine this place without him after his 35 years of service to Mizzou.

While learning the ropes as the new chair, I’ve been reminded on a daily basis of the outstanding students, amazing faculty colleagues—including our graduate student colleagues—and of the many committed alums that make up our Mizzou Communication community (what I like to refer to as M I Z … C O M!). Our undergraduates, led by Director of Undergraduate Studies Astrid Villamil, continue to grow and do remarkable things. In fact, just this fall, we admitted our largest-ever group of majors; and communication is among the top three majors within the College of Arts and Science in terms of annual graduates. Certainly, a degree in communication is in great demand at Mizzou. Our graduate students, led by Director of Graduate Studies Lissa Behm-Morawitz, provide outstanding classroom instruction to our many undergraduates and excel in their own work by earning top awards for their research at professional meetings and regularly publishing their scholarship in our field’s top journals. I hope you’ll take note of the many accomplishments of our outstanding faculty in the pages that follow; and you’ll also find a listing of our Alumni Advisory Council, a dedicated group of alums who give freely of their time and talents to support their department. I’m truly fortunate to be surrounded by such wonderful people working with me to build the strongest program possible.

As we look to the future, I’m excited about our next department milestone at Mizzou—a celebration of the department’s 75th anniversary. In 1939, a small speech program that was part of the Department of English relocated from Jesse Hall to the third floor of Switzler Hall (which at that time was also home to the nation’s first journalism program). Six years later, on May 15, 1940, the university established a Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts. The 1940 fall course bulletin listed 12 classes for the new department, including courses in public speaking, theater, speech improvement, and a single research seminar. Fast forward to the current fall semester and a course bulletin that includes a total of 80 undergraduate communication courses (including 45 public-speaking classes), with approximately 2,300 undergrads enrolled, and nearly 70 graduate students enrolled in eight graduate seminars. Yes, we’ve come a long way, baby!

In the coming weeks and months, you’ll be hearing much more about how you can join in the celebration of 75 years of communication at Mizzou! We have a full year of special activities planned, including our “75 for 75” development campaign where we’re raising $75,000 to celebrate the department’s 75th anniversary. We’ll be inviting our current students and alums to join us on campus as well as through social media to share memories of your time spent in Switzler Hall and share your stories as an important member of our M I Z … C O M community. I look forward to hearing from you and hopefully welcoming you back to campus as we celebrate communication at Mizzou!
Melanie Booth-Butterfield, PhD ’85
Professor and Peggy Rardin McConnell Chair of Speech Communication at West Virginia University and the 2014 Loren Reid Distinguished Lecturer at MU
“I am awe-struck by the transformation of Switzler Hall. It is not only state-of-the-art in technology, but beautiful and classy as well. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit back to Mizzou. A lot has changed, but a lot was familiar, too. Clearly, the young graduate faculty are talented, productive, and caring—very impressive.”

Carissa Loethen, BA ’08
Host at E! Networks
“I’m happy I chose to major in communication. It taught me a variety of skills that came into play at different jobs through the years. For example, my capstone taught me how to use a camera, set up a shot, and edit with Final Cut. Regardless of major, Mizzou is a great school to attend. But the classes within the communication department are definitely the most fun! And when you enjoy what you’re learning, you remember it.”

Damon Romine, BA, BJ ’88
Screen Actors Guild & American Federation of TV and Radio Artists National Director, Communications and Marketing
“I initially attended Mizzou for its journalism program, but it was while taking electives in the communication department that I found my real passion was for entertainment media and communications. Michael Porter served as a mentor while I was in school and has been my biggest supporter ever since. It seems like a lifetime ago that we were learning to physically splice together audiotape and edit on ¾-inch video machines in school. Even though the technology has changed, I continue to put the theories, lessons, and critical thinking I learned at Mizzou into use every day.”

David Whillock, PhD ’86
Dean of the Bob Schieffer College of Communication at Texas Christian University
“As a student, I fondly recall the faculty support I received. The communication faculty were resources for everything I needed, whether it was a discussion on a journal article, or advice on handling the process of becoming a PhD. The support system I had with Mike Porter, Ed Small, and Joe Wolfe really shaped my philosophy of mentoring. I cannot think of a better environment where you could challenge ideas and develop your own scholarship than in the department.”

Michael J. Porter Chair’s Enhancement Fund
After 35 years of service to Mizzou as a professor, adviser, and chair of the department, Michael J. Porter retired in June. Thousands of students, from those who experienced his introductory radio and TV classes, to those he mentored as a doctoral adviser, have been touched by his efforts. In honor of his dedication to Mizzou and the department, his colleagues, friends, family, and former students established the Michael J. Porter Chair’s Enhancement Fund, to provide assistance where it is needed most. This includes support for scholarships, internship opportunities, and faculty enhancement. In this way, Porter will continue to shape the department for years to come. In just a few months since his retirement, more than half of the $25,000 endowment has been raised. Please join in honoring Michael Porter’s legacy at MU by making a gift to the Michael J. Porter Chair’s Enhancement Fund today. You can give online at http://bit.ly/PorterComm or by calling 1-866-267-7568. Checks made payable to the University of Missouri (and marked Porter Enhancement Fund) can be mailed to the MU Office of Advancement, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, Mo. 65211.
Elizabeth (Lissa) Behm-Morawitz was awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor this year. She also stepped into the role of director of graduate studies this summer and is working alongside the department chair to lead efforts in supporting the graduate program. During this past academic year, she published original research in the Journal of Health Communication, Howard Journal of Communications, Games for Health Journal, and Computers in Human Behavior. Her research examines issues of race, gender, sexuality, and health in media entertainment contexts. Behm-Morawitz and Assistant Teaching Professor Astrid Villamil are launching the Virtual Diversity Education (VDE) Project this fall on the MU campus. Their research is a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of a virtual model of diversity education for first-year college students. She is also working on research studies related to health promotion and Second Life; representations of race, gender, and sexuality on television; cyber-harassment in virtual worlds; racial stereotyping in video games; and the use of social media for prosocial effects.

Melissa Click continues working on projects related to audiences’ and fans’ relationships with media texts, including examinations (forthcoming in a book from the University of Illinois Press) of readers’ responses to Fifty Shades of Grey, and male viewers’ responses to the masculinities represented in HBO’s Entourage (forthcoming in Television & New Media). Current projects include examining attitudes toward the sexual relationships depicted in Fifty Shades, Glee fans’ reactions to Cory Monteith’s death, and fans’ responses to the end of Breaking Bad. In April 2014, Melissa chaired the department committee that hosted the international media conference Console-ing Passions at MU, and after the conference, was honored to be asked to join the Console-ing Passions board. In May, Click began serving as the chair of ICA’s Popular Communication Division—she looks forward to this year’s annual conference in Puerto Rico!

Colleen Colaner continues to research communication in diverse families. She is excited about the development of the Family Diversity Institute at MU, a working group aimed at promoting research and understanding of families formed through diverse pathways. She is enjoying her time back at work after being on maternity leave during the spring semester to be with her daughter who was born in November 2013. Debbie Dougherty has had a busy year. First, she received a number of awards, including honorary membership in Lambda Pi Eta, a Top Panel award at the Central States Communication Association annual meeting, and she was selected to serve as faculty marshall at the spring doctoral graduation ceremony with doctoral advisee Angela Gist. Dougherty was also recently promoted to professor. In addition, this summer she kept busy by growing a vegetable garden and enjoying the fruits and vegetables produced.

Haley Kranstuber Horstman has been continuing her work on the ways family members communicate to make sense of their difficult experiences and identities. This year she has published in several national journals, and along with a team of Mizzou doctoral students, earned an NCA Top Paper award for research on the ways mothers and daughters interact to make sense of difficulty. She has also been working with Colleen Colaner to study communication in adoptive families, including adoptees’ management of their joint family identities and open adoptive parents’ communication with and about birth parents. With support from the Richard Wallace Faculty Incentive Grant, Horstman is currently collecting data on married couples’ communication about miscarriage.

Brian Houston continues to co-direct the Terrorism and Disaster Center (TDC, tdcmissouri.edu) in the Department of Communication, a Category II center in the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, which is funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. During the fall 2014 semester, Houston will be working with a team of undergraduate and graduate students to conduct a randomized control trial of TDC’s resilience and coping intervention with MU undergraduate students. He will also be conducting an MU campus-resilience survey with a multidisciplinary Mizzou Advantage team.

2014–15 Department of Communication faculty: front: Melissa Click, Rebecca Meisenbach, Colleen Colaner, Kate Lockwood Harris, and Debbie Dougherty; back: Mitchell McKinney, Astrid Villamil, Haley Kranstuber Horstman, Brian Houston, Elizabeth Behm-Morawitz, and Ben Warner.
focused on disaster resilience. Houston was recognized for his research achievements by receiving the 2014 Provost’s Outstanding Junior Faculty Research Award, the very first time a member of the Department of Communication has received this prestigious award.

Mitchell McKinney was recently promoted to professor and appointed chair of the Department of Communication. In 2014, he received the Outstanding Director of Graduate Studies Award from the Office of Graduate Studies; he was a recipient of a Faculty-Alumni Award from the Mizzou Alumni Association; his recent article examining the effects of presidential debates that appeared in *Argumentation and Advocacy* (co-written with Ben Warner) received the Michael Pfau Outstanding Article Award from NCAs Political Communication Division; and his sixth book, *alieNATION: The Divide and Conquer Election of 2012* (co-edited with Diane Bystrom of Iowa State University and Mary Banwat of the University of Kansas), was published in August. He’s currently finishing the final editing of chapters for book seven, *Political Socialization in a Media Saturated World* (co-edited with Esther Thorson of the MU School of Journalism and Dhavan Shah of the University of Wisconsin).

Rebecca Meisenbach directed the Department of Communication’s second Summer Institute on Organizational Communication and Culture for 22 students from Shanghai Normal University. Her most-recent journal publication addresses how volunteers articulate nested identities as they discuss voluntary organizational membership decisions. She also stayed busy this year continuing her work as the managing director of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, serving on the editorial board for six communication journals, and guiding three of her doctoral advisees through the completion of their dissertations this past spring. In addition, Meisenbach is the new associate editor for the journal *Culture and Organization* and has been awarded a Research Council grant and a University of Missouri 2014-15 faculty development leave to focus on her research on stigma communication and organizing.

Astrid Villamil enjoyed her first year as an assistant teaching professor. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she also assumed the role of internship coordinator and director of undergraduate studies. Her outstanding teaching was recognized by the department’s undergraduate student organization, iCOM. In her spare time, Villamil continues to do research—she has co-written a piece that will be presented as part of the Top Paper panel of the Organizational Communication Division at NCA this November in Chicago.

Ben Warner’s study (with graduate students Hayley Cole and Joshua Hawthorne) received the 2014 Top Paper award from the political communication interest group of the Central States Communication Association, and a paper he co-wrote with his doctoral adviser was selected as one of the top four papers in the political communication division of the National Communication Association. Warner also led a team of undergraduate research fellows with the Political Communication Institute (pci.missouri.edu) on a project that was awarded a Richard Wallace Faculty Incentive Grant. His research during 2014 was published in *American Behavioral Scientist, Communication Quarterly*, and an edited collection titled *Presidential Campaigning and Social Media: An Analysis of the 2012 Campaign*.

Welcome!

*Kate Lockwood Harris’s* scholarship uses critical, feminist, and intersectional perspectives to answer the question, “How is violence communicated?” Her research on organizational responses to sexual assault has been published in *Management Communication Quarterly*, and related work appears in *Discourse & Society, Women and Language*, and *Women’s Studies in Communication*, among other outlets. Continuing this line of inquiry, Harris is finishing several manuscripts in which she examines Title IX lawsuits at U.S. universities in order to theorize the relationship between discursive and material violence. Earlier this year, she was honored with the International Communication Association’s prestigious W. Charles Redding Dissertation Award. She is pleased to join a vibrant community of colleagues and emerging scholars at Mizzou. When not writing and teaching about communication, Harris leads dance classes. She looks forward to connecting with fellow salser@s in Columbia!

Thank You!

 Congratulations to Cathy Illingworth, senior secretary in the Department of Communication, for 15 years of service. Thanks for all that you do, Cathy, to keep Switzler Hall running!
The Political Communication Institute’s 2014 undergraduate research fellows examined persuasion in political advertising, a research project directed by PCI faculty member Ben Warner and funded through a Richard Wallace Incentive Grant.

Members of the University of Missouri’s Chi Beta chapter are shown at their spring induction ceremony, including: (front) Sara Trask (adviser), Sungjoo We, Xinyi Lu, Paige Foerstel, Liz Avants, Shelbi Danner, Alyssa Noce, Anastasia Anderson, and Jori Kodroff; back: Jennifer Pottage, Elizabeth Howard, Chelsea Weidauer, Nicolette Clynes, John Olson, Rich Polzin, Ryan Wegrzyn, Katie Greathouse, Emily Pokoik, Taylor Rickard, Abigail Railton, and Danielle Poyn- ter (adviser).

Front: Sadie McCue, Rachel Jag, and Devon Slavens; back: Kelsey Brown, Cassondra Maschhoff, Clinton Cannon, Camille Howard, and Ben Warner. Jag and Slavens, respectively, received the Department of Communication’s 2013 and 2014 Top Senior in Political Communication Award.


Meghan Pollock, Paige Foerstel, Kimberly Jansen, and Robert Sessions.

2013–14 Undergraduate Awards

Mary-Jeanette Smythe Award—Outstanding Senior in Interpersonal Communication
Jennifer Johnston

Outstanding Senior in Political Communication
Rachel Jag

Outstanding Senior in Organizational Communication
Ana Popovic

Outstanding Senior in Mass Media
Paige Foerstel
Katie Greathouse

G. Joseph Wolfe Award—Outstanding Senior in Media Production
Lee Eigner
Daniel Woodward

The Loren Reid Award—Outstanding Senior in Service and Leadership
Brett Dinkins
Sheridan Brown
China Summer Institute
The Department of Communication hosted the 2014 Summer China Institute, including 22 students and one faculty member from Shanghai Normal University in Shanghai, China.

2014 Graduate Student Awards

Superior Graduate Achievement Award
Matt Spialek

Frank & Lila Gilman Memorial Fellowship Award
and the
Graduate Research Award
Amanda Edgar

Loren Reid Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award
Leslie Nelson (left) and Sara Trask
Graduate Service Award
Sara Trask


Commuqué is published annually by the Department of Communication at the University of Missouri.

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The department appreciates hearing from alumni and friends. Send announcements or milestones to the address listed above.

Alumni Advisory Council

The Department of Communication is honored to have the accomplished and talented group of alumni who serve as members of its advisory council. The council meets twice each year on campus and assists with a number of projects, including funding of travel scholarships for summer interns, creating and endowing the Michael J. Porter Chair Enhancement Fund, participating in our annual Comm Week activities, and assisting with plans for the department’s 75th-anniversary celebrations.

Michael Atchison  Attorney and writer  Kansas City, Mo.
Mary Chalender  General sales manager, KY Inc. TV  Springfield, Mo.
Ty Christian  Owner, TRC Consulting Group  Orlando, Fla.
Tracy Feller  MU Extension, constituent relations manager  Columbia, Mo.
Gene Gillespie  Strategic business development leader, Better 2.0, LLC  Atlanta, Ga.
Anna Hargis  Director of advertising, Shelter Insurance Company  Columbia, Mo.
Benjamin Lamb  Senior content manager, The Recording Academy (GRAMMY Awards)  Santa Monica, Calif.
Bill Lambberg  Owner/president, Printfinders.com  St. Louis, Mo.
Duane Lammers  Broadcasting consultant, Silver Point Capital  O’Fallon, Mo.
Michael Mulvihill  Senior vice-president, FOX Sports Media  New York City, N.Y.
Tom O’Neal  MU College of Arts & Science senior director of advancement  Columbia, Mo.
Melody Parry  Owner, OutFront Communications  Columbia, Mo.
Michael J. Porter  Emeritus faculty, MU Department of Communication  Columbia, Mo.
Howard Richards  Mizzou football color analyst / Harris-Stowe State University  St. Louis, Mo.
Terrie Robbins  Former vice-president and general manager of STLtoday.com, St. Louis Post-Dispatch  St. Louis, Mo.
Damon Romine  Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of TV and Radio Artists  Los Angeles, Calif.
Stan Silvey  Director of strategic communication, Mizzou Network  Columbia, Mo.
Deb Snellen  MU director for advancement  Columbia, Mo.
Steve Wagner  Operations manager, Great American Title  Springfield, Mo.
Susan Miller Warden  Assistant managing editor, Washington Missourian  Washington, Mo.
Bill Wells  Department of Health Management and Informatics, MU School of Medicine  Columbia, Mo.
Darrin Widick  President, Widick Marketing Inc./Group 3 Solutions  Kansas City, Mo.
Steven Wujek  Vice-president and account director, Barkley Advertising  Kansas City, Mo.