

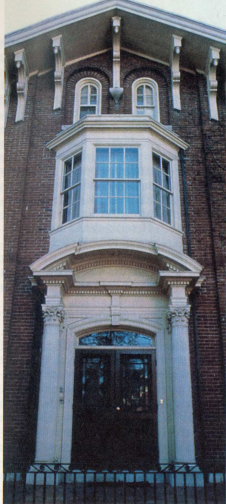


The Chancellor's Residence, the grande dame of the Quadrangle, wears her mantle of history with the patient serenity of one who has lived long, usefully, and generally, well. Since completion



THE QUADRANGLE'S HOUSE OF HISTORY

Text by Carol Baskin and photos by Larry Boehm



Housekeeper Jo Hatton, below, passes pictures of University presidents and chancellors and their wives every time she climbs the stairs. Chancellor Barbara Uehling, right, shows her office staff a small Christmas gift at a tree-trimming party.



111 years ago, the house has been home to 10 presidents and two chancellors as they guided the affairs of the Campus. Some of these leaders raised families; others invited grandchildren. Within the walls, a baby was born; a president's wife died; and three couples were married.

THE GLEEFUL LAUGHTER OF CHILDREN, sliding down the banisters and peeking out the attic windows to watch students on Francis Quadrangle, has filled the three-story mansion at times. The residence has had its silent years, too, when the University was without a leader or that person lived elsewhere. Chancellor Emeritus Herb Schooling and his late wife, Bess, stayed in their Columbia home when he became Chancellor in 1970, although they used the official residence for University entertaining. Mrs. Schooling's service to the University was recognized this past October 1, when the garden in the southeast lawn was dedicated to her memory.

Today, the Chancellor's Residence is a home once again. Schooling's successor, Dr. Barbara Uehling, and her 18-year-old son, David, moved in last summer when she assumed Mizou's top post. Uehling has said making Mizou's oldest structure her home is symbolic of her commitment to the University. She has taken steps to insure the house becomes more integrated into Campus life.

The house has more than being the oldest building on Campus to its historical credit. The money used to finance its construction in 1867 was part of the first appropriation the Missouri Legislature ever made to the State University it had established 28 years earlier. The first few decades of the University's life were spent struggling to survive. Not the least of the hazards it surmounted was the Civil War. But barely. With the town of Columbia occupied by Union troops, enrollment dropped to fewer than 25 students, and the University was forced to close for about two years. The sum total of the Campus in those years was the old Academic Hall and the first President's Home. Col. Lewis Merrill used Academic Hall as his headquarters and barracks his officers there while the house served as a prison until the war ended in 1865. But on a snowy November night that year, fire destroyed the home.

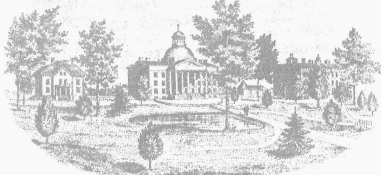
The University was completely without resources to rebuild. Two weeks after the fire the Board of Curators met and resolved to ask the Legislature for \$15,000 to build a new president's home and restore Academic Hall and the Campus to pre-war conditions. The next year a bill to provide the funds failed by nine votes. With additional persuasion, the Legislature approved a \$10,000 appropriation on March 11, 1867.

THE COLUMBIA STATESMAN made a jubilant announcement of the appropriation in its March 15, 1867, issue: "It is the most important bill for the permanency and prosperity of the University . . . ever passed by the Legislature. . . ."

The Curators specified that the new home be built on the exact site of the first one, 134 feet directly east of Academic Hall. Later in 1867, the appropriation was found inadequate to build what the local newspaper promised would be "a large, well-appointed edifice worthy of its object and an ornament to the town." Later that year the Curators reported to the Legislature that, what with the high price of building materials in post-war days, and given all the repairs Academic Hall required, it could not stretch the \$10,000 far enough. To explain going over the budget by \$4,000, the Curators said a house the actual appropriation would have built would have indicated "a niggard parsimony" on the part of the Legislature, and "a lasting source of regret and dissatisfaction." It termed the new president's home "a spacious, handsome, tasteful brick building, two stories high, with basement and attic, in keeping with the University edifice. . . ." Daniel Reed was the first president of the University to occupy the residence which was completed in 1868.

Today, the house survives as "a good and rich example" of the Italianate architecture popular during the period, says Dr. Osmond Overby, director of Mizou's Museum of Art and Archeology. Because of extensive remodeling, the interior exhibits few traces of anything structurally significant. The exterior, too, has been altered considerably. But the strong geometric form, irregular plan, bay windows, and large, heavy brackets supporting the wide overhang of the low-pitched hip roof, all combine to maintain architectural integrity of the Italianate period. Classic details include windows grouped in twos and threes, lintels over some and others arched, and the Corinthian columns that frame the front door. A cornerstone, heart-shaped and bearing the simple inscription "1867," soars over the main entrance. The house originally had a porch over the front steps. Later it was extended across the entire front of the house. The porch was removed in the 1920s, but scars in the brick are evidence of its presence.

BREDELLE AND ADELIN JESSE have fond childhood memories of the old porch. Two of Richard Jesse's six children, they lived in the house until 1907 when ill health forced their father to leave the presidency. University horticulturists often left boxes of greenery on the porch for Mrs. Jesse, and Bredelle remembers shooting off Roman candles from the porch on the Fourth of July each year. "We used to wonder whether we would set the Chemistry Building afire," he chuckles. Born in the house in 1894, Bredelle says his first memories are from 1900. Mark Twain with his white suit and white hair made a lasting impression on the young lad when the American author



received an honorary doctorate in 1902. Later Twain came to dinner at the Jesses' and spent some time talking with the children.

The area east of the Quadrangle was the site of numerous large homes, which have long since been razed to make way for expansion of the University. "There were just swarms of children in the neighborhood in those days," says Adeline. "We had quite a lively time." The children had a baseball diamond on the east side of the house, hid from each other in the furnace's cold air shaft in the basement, and played a game called "kick the wicket" around a huge sycamore tree that still shades the house. "It was a big tree, even in those days," says Adeline.

The Jesses still live nearby in a home the family built when they moved from Campus.

Bredelle Jesse, who taught French 43 years at Mizzou, says pranksters had plenty of imagination in the early 1900s. He remembers a pair of sculpted lions that kept vigil over the Campus from the corners of Academic Hall (named Jesse Hall after his father's death in 1921). In a mystery never completely solved, the lions suddenly one morning appeared as Missouri Tigers, thanks to an artful application of paint.

Were it not for the remembrances of the Jesses, little information would be available on the house between its construction in 1867 and 1923-24, when a major renovation was undertaken for Stratton Brooks, the new president. Curators' records indicate the kitchen wing had to be entirely rebuilt, the staircase replaced, a garage added, and a new roof installed. The garden area on the house's east side was enclosed with a brick wall. The total project cost nearly \$68,000, an expense that did not go unnoticed by the press and the Legislature. In today's jargon, the ruckus could be termed a "media event." The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* complained in 1926 that \$68,000 had been spent to repair a \$10,000 house.

Major mechanical repairs and another renovation were required in 1968 while Chancellor and Mrs. John Schwada were living there. The kitchen and bathrooms were redone, and new carpeting and wallpaper installed, says Jay Porter, University interior designer. The project was expensive, but as Porter puts it, "with a house that old, you're never really finished."

In preparation for Uehling's arrival, the interior underwent what Jesse Hall administrators call "a little dressing up." The interior was painted, the kitchen papered, and a few upstairs rooms recarpeted with choices she made. The only furniture addition was a small grand piano loaned by the music department. Uehling, who started college on a music scholarship, plays well.

A casual observer might think the mansion has aged gracefully, but a closer inspection reveals several flaws that merit attention. The brickwork bears some of that unevenness unique to old buildings, but considerable tuck-pointing is in order. The patina on the copper downspouts

and gutters is handsome indeed, but some of the soffits and other wooden roof structure are deteriorating. A new roof is needed to replace the slate one that, after 54 years, is leaking. The stone retaining wall that supports the quarry tile patio in front of the house is unstable.

Early in 1974, the University's application to have Francis Quadrangle included on the National Register of Historic Places was approved. One of the benefits of such a designation is eligibility for federal matching funds for repairs and restorations. The University is awaiting replies on applications it has submitted for the Chancellor's Residence, Jesse and Swallow Halls, and the Engineering Building. An estimated \$150,000 is needed for the Chancellor's Residence, and the grant seeks half that amount.

The main floor is given over to public use, and it's unlikely that guests would trip over the furniture. There's plenty of standing room for the students, alumni, faculty and staff Uehling is inviting in. At receptions for middle management staff she hosted this fall, the Chancellor says a number of people told her they had worked for the University for 20 years or more and never set foot in the house.

Uehling invited art faculty to display their works in the house, a move which has added some color to the subdued decor. Paintings and prints by Tracy Montminy, Jerry Bemeche, Erica Rutherford, Lawrence McKinin, Brooke Cameron, John Weller, and Frank Stack are hung in first floor rooms. A ceramic sculpture by Robert Bussabarger is on display, too. A glass-front case holds several Cybis bird and wildlife porcelain sculptures, part of a valuable collection given to the University last year by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Menser of Columbia. Victorian parlor pieces, gifts from Irene S. Taylor of Columbia, furnish a sitting room on the second floor.

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE the family beagle, Susie, romping up the staircase — much less son David coming downstairs to raid the Uehling's own separate refrigerator. The house seems more a museum than a home, even on the second and third floors, where Uehling and her son live. There is some living room furniture in one of the second floor bedrooms, and Uehling has one of the other three rooms on that floor as her own. She spends most of her "at-home" time in an office she set up in a small room with sloping ceiling on the third floor. It has a desk, chair, and small stereo. That's all. Her son's room is on the third floor too, in what was the trunk room when the Jesses were there. The Chancellor acknowledges the residence "lacks personal touches," but "you can't beat the convenience," she says of the short walk to her office in Jesse Hall.

Uehling has exchanged the privacy she could have in a home of her own for the opportunity to invite student groups to breakfast, hold receptions after concerts, and have the Faculty Council to dinner. The house's expanded role, along with its restoration plans, is giving new life to the oldest building at Mizzou. □