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Serving the Land

MU alumnus takes education abroad and revolutionizes industry.

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On a trip to India in 2011, Kattesh V. Katti, curators' professor of radiology and physics, senior research scientist at the research reactor, and director of the University of Missouri Cancer Nanotechnology Platform, spent an afternoon at the Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHIATS)



Anne Deaton, Chancellor Brady J. Deaton, SHIATS Professor Newmann Fernandes and MU Professor Kattesh V. Katti at the hotel in Allahabad, India. Photo courtesy of Stephen Das.

in Allahabad, India. In addition to delivering a lecture on green nanotechnology in agriculture, medicine and engineering, he also discussed possible collaborations between the two universities.

The conversation went well, and to follow up, SHIATS sent a delegation to MU in fall 2012. In addition to fostering international exchange, SHIATS professors Newmann Fernandes, Chandra Kant Shukla and Shailesh Marker visited the State Historical Society of Missouri on campus to learn more about Mason Vaugh, a Missourian who revolutionized farming in India and is the eponym of the institute's School of Agricultural Engineering and Technology.

While wading through historical documents, Fernandes found a relationship already existed between SHIATS and MU via Vaugh: Not only was Vaugh a Missourian, born and raised in Farmington, Mo., but he also attended the University of Missouri.

In 1921, after earning bachelor's degrees in agriculture and in agricultural engineering from

MU, Vaugh applied for a position as an agricultural missionary with the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. He was appointed to the Allahabad Agricultural Institute (now SHIATS) where he served until his retirement in 1954.

As only the second person to graduate from MU with a degree in agricultural engineering and the first person in India to teach a course in agricultural engineering, Vaugh brought innovative ideas and a fresh perspective. At the institute, he designed tools that allowed for more efficient work, fewer costs and less hard labor for Indian farmers. Using Vaugh's equipment, a farmer could turn 22 acres of land a day, whereas using older implements, a farmer could work only four to five acres. Vaugh's contributions earned him the reputation among colleagues as the Father of Agricultural Engineering in India.

Armed with a suitcase of nearly 4,000 pages copied from the State Historical Society archives, Fernandes returned to India and drafted a short biography of Vaugh in 30 days, just in time for a



SHIATS Professor Newmann Fernandes shows Chancellor Brady J. Deaton the book he wrote on Mason Vaughn, an MU graduate and known as the Father of Agricultural Engineering in India. Photo courtesy of Stephen Das.

visit from Chancellor Brady J. Deaton, wife Anne Deaton and Katti from Nov. 20–29, 2012.

Anne Deaton, an adjunct professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in the College of Human Environmental Sciences, met with faculty and students in response to their

interests in social science disciplines, and Chancellor Deaton gave the keynote address at the SHIATS graduation ceremony.

With the knowledge of the tie that binds the two institutions, the trio from MU made sure to see the open-air museum featuring the original agricultural equipment Vaughn designed.

“That told volumes of stories,” Katti says.

“Breathtaking was an understatement. How many times do we come across an alumnus from MU who goes overseas and builds a time-tested university? We have been talking about building

international relationships. This really epitomizes international relationships.”

Adds Deaton: “It was inspiring to discover the impact that one of our MU graduates has had on modern agriculture in India. We want our alumni to know that. We also want the community of Farmington, Mo., to know that.”

From a meeting with Katti’s nanomedicine research group to discuss building the world’s first green nanotechnology institute to a conversation with College of Engineering Dean Jim Thompson about a degree program for SHIATS students to complete two years in their institution and transferring to MU for the final two years, the opportunities for working together continue to pop up.

A delegation from India is expected to return to MU in June 2013 to sign a memorandum of understanding, the thought of which makes Katti chuckle.

“It’s interesting that now we’re talking about a formal mechanism for how the two institutions

can work together,” he says, “but Mason Vaugh already went there and established this relationship.”

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