A Great Run
NEP professor Tom Thomas retires after 25 years at MU

AFTER TOM THOMAS earned his PhD in exercise physiology from MU in August 1976, he began teaching at KU (“Yes, the Jayhawks,” he says). But when a position opened up at his alma mater in 1986, he applied and soon became an important member of the Nutrition and Exercise Physiology (NEP) faculty.

“Dr. Thomas single handedly kept human exercise physiology alive on this campus for many years,” says department chair Chris Hardin. “Because of him, it is now a thriving program and provides the translational interface to an outstanding campus-wide excellence in exercise physiology.”

Thomas was involved in several committees, and says he truly enjoyed the content and students in his exercise physiology courses. His favorite contribution, however, was serving as Director of Graduate Studies for most of his 25 years at MU. “I really enjoyed that position because I got to interact with both students and faculty members in a positive way,” he says.

Thomas, who retired in August 2011, now spends most of his time working on his corn and soybean farm near Fayette, Mo. Although he misses the daily interaction with colleagues and students, he looks forward to spending time with his wife and one day coaching high school baseball or basketball.

But back at MU, “The department is clearly different without Tom around,” Hardin says. “He had such an institutional understanding and a traditional approach to education and training. Students loved Dr. Thomas and his enthusiasm for teaching and involving students in research will be missed.”

Fashion Forward
TAM alumna brings Project Runway to Columbia school kids

M ANY KIDS ARE FASHION conscious, but few understand the hard work and energy behind the fashion industry. TAM alumna Amy Parris set out to change that last summer with the first ever Project Runway Camp, a week-long program for early adolescents ages 11 to 15. Parris’ resume includes years working in New York, Los Angeles and Paris with top designers, photographers and models – and even starting her own clothing line, worn by celebrities such as Kelly Osbourne and Amanda Bynes. “After moving back to Missouri two years ago with my husband and three kids, I wanted to share my fashion knowledge and experiences, which is what inspired the Project Runway Camp,” she says.

Offered through Columbia Public Schools at the Columbia Area Career Center (CACC), Parris attracted 13 students to learn about the design process, couture sewing, draping techniques, and more. “The final project was to create a themed mood board to inspire a T-shirt design; campers illustrated their vision, and used embellishing techniques learned during class to design their very own look,” Parris explains. “The last day, campers learned the ins and outs of putting together a runway show: setup, music, lighting, seating, timing walks and merchandising the looks from the start to the finish of the show, then walked the runway for friends and family wearing their designs.”

Parris, who does marketing for CACC, serves on the HES Alumni Board and mentors students in addition to planning a Dress for Success class for HES students. This spring, she is teaching couture sewing techniques for adult students at CACC, and this summer, you’ll find her back at Project Runway Camp.

P H O T O S C O U R T E S Y O F A M Y P A R R I S

Participants showing off their garments and design boards at Project Runway Camp