Tell Me About Truman the Tiger

David Schramm’s children’s book delves into Missouri’s mascot history.

There are few things more entertaining than a guy in a tiger suit – at least that was the case when David Schramm, assistant professor of Human Development and Family Studies, took his kids to an MU volleyball game a couple years ago. “We got there early, and we were giving high-fives to Truman,” Schramm remembers. As the game progressed, “I was trying to teach them about volleyball, but they just kept asking about Truman.”

Schramm told his children that Truman was named after President – and Missourian – Harry S. Truman. “Days later I started to wonder more about the history of Truman, and I started to dig,” Schramm says. “It was then that I thought how little most people, especially little children, know about their university mascot.”

During Schramm’s research, the idea for a children’s book was born. With some help from publisher MascotBooks.com, Tell Me About Truman the Tiger debuted on Nov. 1. The story is narrated by Grandpa Johnson (Schramm’s wife’s grandfather, who passed away in 2000) and stars Truman alongside Schramm’s two youngest children, Aubrey and Hayden. “They think they are just the coolest,” laughs Schramm, who shared the book in an assembly at the kids’ school, Mill Creek Elementary in Columbia.

Tell Me About Truman the Tiger is available in the MU Bookstore, Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and Hy-Vee. Schramm distributed 600 copies in the first three weeks – enough to make a dent in his initial order of 2,000. “The stack in my garage is dwindling down,” he says.


In the meantime, Schramm is active in Columbia Cares for Kids (CCK), a coalition developed in 2010 with a mission to “bring families, professionals, and communities together to ensure emotionally healthy environments for children” via workshops, trainings, events and more. In March 2013, CCK teamed up with Columbia and Jefferson City Public Schools, the Daniel Boone Regional Library and Head Start programs to launch a community literacy initiative called March Reading Madness, during which elementary students were encouraged to read one million minutes (as a school district). To encourage kids, Truman and MU athletes attended reading rallies at schools throughout mid-Missouri. “The book has turned into a much more exciting and bigger project,” Schramm says.

Tell Me About Truman the Tiger can be purchased online at MinutesandMascots.com for $15. All Mizzou alumni receive a 15 percent discount if they enter the code MUALUM15OFF.