

C. Randal Vessell-2010

It's a little-known face that prior to an illustrious career at the University of Missouri-Columbia C. Randal Vessell was a legendary basketball player at the University of Missouri-Rolla. After earning a Masters Degree in 1975 Randy began his 31-year career at Mizzou in 1976, joining the faculty of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism as an Assistant Professor of public recreation management and therapeutic recreation. In 1981, Randy received his PhD in Administration Management and Higher Education with a minor in Leisure Services Administration from the University of Iowa and became the Associate Professor in Columbia providing graduate and undergraduate instruction in public recreation management. Dr. Vessell was named chair of the Department in 1992 and continued in that capacity until his retirement in 2007 where he administered a nationally accredited academic department offering both undergraduate and graduate degrees along with significant missions for teaching, research and outreach. The proudest legacy for an educator is the hundreds of students they have influenced. Randy possesses that legacy; however, he had a profound impact on the Parks and Recreation field in the state of Missouri in many other ways. An active member of the Missouri Park and Recreation Association for over 34 years, Randy served 26 years on the Legislative and Critical Issues Committee, including Chair from 1981 to 1989 when MPRA first authored and introduced sales tax legislation that provided Missouri public agencies a dedicated source of funding. Also a member of the Study and Research Committee, he went on to become President of MPRA in 2001-02. Building on the success of his predecessors who successfully fought elimination of the Parks and Recreation academic program at the University in 1980 and 1990, Randy's strong and proactive leadership over the 15 years he served as Department Chair kept the program out of harm's way. He was a valued member of the College of Agriculture's School of Natural Resources faculty, serving on nearly 20 committees and taskforces at the College and University level. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri President's Academic Leadership Institute. He also served as a member of the State Inter-agency Council for Outdoor Recreation, which was responsible for awarding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Local Landmark Park grants to communities throughout the State for improvement of park and recreation facilities. Randy has been a member of the National Recreation and Park Association since 1973. He is a member of the American Park and Recreation Society and the Society for Park and Recreation Educators. A Certified Park and Recreation Professional and Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, he was inducted into the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration in 1999. In recognition of his service, Randy has been honored with the Faculty Excellence in Leadership Award from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1997, the National Therapeutic Recreation Society Presidential Citation in 2006, the Professional Appreciation Award from the Missouri Division of State Parks in 2007 and the Eyes of the Tiger Lifetime Achievement Award from the University of Missouri in 2007. Another little known fact, Randy served as a Colonel in the Missouri National Guard for many years and was inducted into the OCS Hall of Fame at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1999. Randy earned the MPRA Fellow Award in 1999 and the Retirement

Service Award in 2008. His leadership, talent, integrity, commitment and loyalty are woven into his character and leave an unwavering legacy of dedication to the betterment of our field.