

## OUR VIEW

## Ideals of MU's great agriculturist live on

**L**AST month in Columbia, I officially became a Missourian. The University of Missouri Ag Alumni Organization saw fit to make me an honorary member. It was quite a humbling experience for this ag journalist born and educated in Kansas. During

my 22 years working in Missouri, I've greatly benefited from my experiences and continuing education with MU's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, as well as MU Extension.

My gratitude goes out to all who gave me the opportunity to prove myself

— especially my award nominator, Dick Lee, retired MU Extension ag editor.

It was easy to get caught up in the black and gold spirit while attending the Celebration of Excellence program hosted by MU-CAFNR. The best part, however, was hearing the stories of the

award winners — outstanding alumni, professors and students.

During my acceptance speech, I pointed out that MU and my alma mater, Kansas State University, share a great agriculturist, Henry Jackson Waters. Waters was president of Kansas State Agricultural College from 1909-17. Buildings on both MU and K-State campuses are named in his honor. Most importantly, if it wasn't for Waters, there wouldn't be an MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

Waters was born in 1865 on a Ralls County farm. His father was a progressive farmer who raised purebred Shropshire sheep, Shorthorn cattle and mules. Young Waters studied the mules, Shrops and Shorthorns, but wanted to know more. His father, who lectured at farmers' institutes and read many books and periodicals, inspired him.

Waters heard that they had started a course in agriculture at the University of Missouri. No Missourian had had the nerve to tackle it, knowing the attitude in Columbia toward "clodhoppers." Despite ridicule and even political protests by legislators in Jefferson City, Waters decided to enroll.

Waters proved them wrong. He went on to earn honors and graduated in June 1886. He took a job as assistant secretary of the State Board of Agriculture. After two years, Waters was promoted to the Missouri Experiment Station and stayed there until 1891. He then went on to serve as an agriculture professor at Penn State. Four years later, Missouri called him back to become dean of the MU College of Agriculture. More than 100 students enrolled in agriculture that year. During his 11-year administration, the college became the second largest at MU. His animal nutrition research became known throughout the world.

Waters was a man of strong convictions. He demanded results, but always with the well-being of rural people in mind. If Waters could come back and lecture today, I think he'd be impressed with MU's agriculture students and research progress. But I also think he would remind us not to stray from our land-grant roots. He'd tell us to hold fast to the broad and noble ideals of agriculture and to continue practical research that can be applied to Missouri farms.

**50 YEARS OLD AND SHE STILL STARTS ON THE FIRST TRY.  
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