

Kansas City Foundation for Higher Education

An Endowment for UMKC

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Higher Ed Foundation Hires Development Expert

New Executive Director has Significant Track Record

A widely-recognized expert in coordinating university fund-raising campaigns has been hired by the Kansas City Foundation for Higher Education to work fulltime on behalf of the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Murray Blackwelder, senior vice-president for advancement at Purdue University, recently completed directing a campaign that raised nearly \$1.7 billion for the Indiana university. Prior to joining Purdue in 2001, Blackwelder was vice-president of external affairs at Iowa State University, which experienced record-breaking campaigns of \$214 million in 1993 and \$450 million in 2000.

Blackwelder officially joins the Foundation as its executive director July 15. Prior to that he will serve as a consultant to the Foundation working with University officials on an affiliation agreement whereby the Foundation would assume all development activities for the University and would change its name to UMKC Foundation. An agreement in principle between the Foundation and the University was signed in January.

"This is a major step for the Foundation," Alan Atterbury, Foundation chair said. "Someone of Murray's expertise and enthusiasm for raising funds that will enhance the University is exactly what we need for UMKC. We believe he's one of the best and that's what we went after in seeking the first executive director of the Foundation." Atterbury said the Foundation talked with Blackwelder for two years before officials were able to lure him to Kansas City.

Blackwelder, a graduate of Baker University, began his career in the early '80s by raising nearly \$1 million for Baker. He later became director of development at Rockhurst College where he was tutored by a master fund raiser, Father Maurice Van Ackeran. Blackwelder also holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from UMKC.

"I am coming back to where I began," Blackwelder said. "The Foundation will be devoted solely to raising funds to enhance UMKC. I envision using my fund-raising skills to help create a greater University for Kansas City. My legacy will become a stronger University in Kansas City."

"But fund-raising is not a one-person show. It encompasses the deans and faculty, alumni and students, as well as the civic and business community that have formed this Foundation. Chancellor Leo Morton and I have worked out a game plan. Curt Crespino (interim vice chancellor, Advancement) and I share common goals. I am ready to go to work."

The Kansas City Foundation for Higher Education was initiated by the UMKC Trustees nearly three years ago in response to the *Time to Get It Right Report's* recommendation for a locally-controlled Foundation directed by business and civic leaders.

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