

# MSU to honor Crain, Strong with honorary degrees

By Claudette Riley

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Missouri State University has selected longtime volunteer Elise Crain and attorney Tom Strong to receive honorary degrees during the May 15 commencement ceremony.

The two were nominated for the doctor of public affairs degrees by the faculty senate and President Clif Smart. The nomi-

nations were approved Friday by the MSU Board of Governors.

Cynthia Hail, chair of the honorary doctorate selection committee, explained why the two were chosen.

"Both are respected community leaders, willing volunteers, role models, and advocates for families and others in crisis, and inspirations for public service.



Elise Crain



Tom Strong

See MSU, Page 3A

## MSU

Continued from Page 2A

We look forward to their participation at spring commencement," she said, in a news release.

### Crain

Crain was praised for her work with education and children, specifically helping to found the Ozark Care to Learn program, which works to meet the health, hunger and hygiene needs of children in that school district. She volunteers as well, according to a news release.

She has been grants director for the Women in Need of the Ozarks program, a not-for-profit organization for single working women who need one-time assistance during a crisis.

The longtime volunteer has also helped the Friends of the Christian

County Museum, Ozarks Public Television, EarthShare Missouri, Missouri Preservation, the Discovery Center and the Missouri Commission on Human Rights.

She also was the founding (and continuing) governor of the Finley River Community Foundation, responsible for distributing over \$120,000 in grants to organizations and individuals in need in Christian county

### Strong

Strong's volunteer leadership at Missouri State University has included serving as president of the Alumni Association, co-founder and charter member of the basketball booster club, member of the MSU Board of Governors, and president of the Missouri State University Foundation.

He also actively assisted the university in obtaining its name change, from Southwest Missouri State University to Missouri State University,

in 2005.

According to the release, "Strong has been a longtime champion in Missouri's litigation against the tobacco industry, and has been a legal leader in the state and nation, noted for his professionalism, ethics, character and trial advocacy."

He has volunteered with the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys, the Missouri Board of Law Examiners and the Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association.

The first MSU honorary doctorate was awarded in 2003. The purpose of the award is to recognize achievements by citizens in hope of encouraging others.

Previous recipients are Sister Lorraine Biebel, Harold Bengsch, David Harrison, Pat Walker, Annie Busch, Jim Craig, Nancy Brown Dornan, Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, Jan Horton, Pattie Penny, Calvin Allen, Gordon McCann, Bert Park, Shawn Askinosie, John Goodman, John Rush and James Tatum.