

Community Impact

Evidence of Fenley's Support Extends from Washburn to Kansas City.

By Angela Lutz

It's hard to drive through downtown Kansas City, Missouri, without seeing one of the companies **David Fenley, BBA '76, JD '79**, has helped during his 45-year career as a real estate transactions lawyer. In recent years, he has worked with several recognizable institutions to build national headquarters, develop property, and shape the look and feel of the city – including redeveloping the Country Club Plaza, a Kansas City landmark.

“I love to help real estate developers get their projects off the ground or redevelop projects in the city,” Fenley said. “It’s a lot of fun for me.”

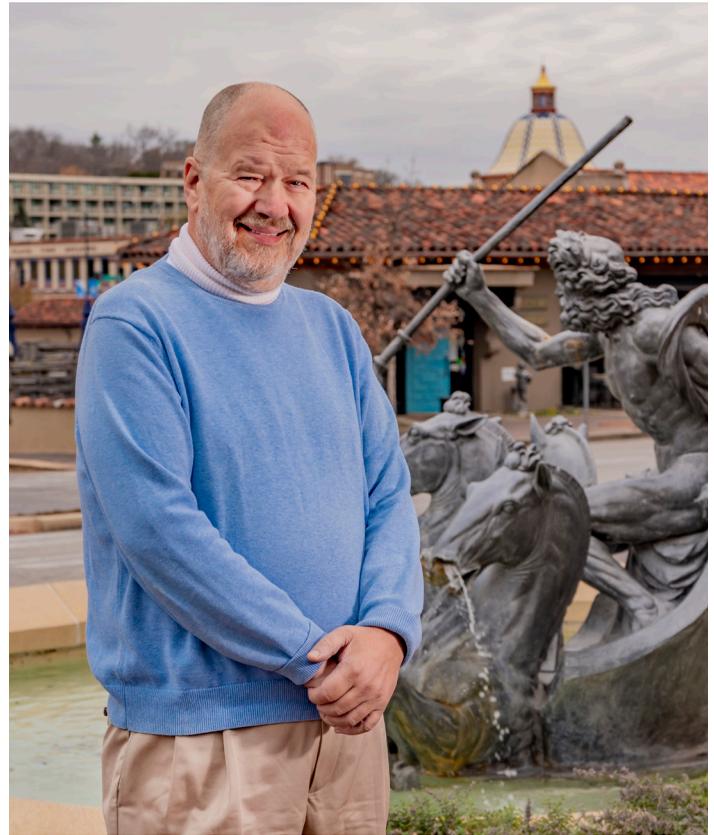
Fenley spent the first 38 years of his career at Husch Blackwell Sanders, eventually becoming a partner and serving on the executive board and as chair. He also helped grow the firm from 38 attorneys to more than 700. Since 2018, Fenley has served as counsel at Dentons, focusing primarily on land use questions, rezonings, and securing development incentives from the city, state, and county for developers.

For his highly successful career, Fenley credits not only his time at Washburn University School of Law, but also his time as an undergraduate at Washburn. He is quick to note that his accounting degree helped him tremendously in his legal career.

“Washburn offers a very successful set of undergraduate programs as well as the law school,” Fenley said. “My education there could match up against anywhere in the country. With my accounting background, I was able to understand the financial needs of developers. I was very comfortable working with the numbers.”

Fenley's affinity for Washburn extends beyond just his education. During his first year of college, he also played on the football team, and he was a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, serving both as president of the local chapter and as a student member of the national board of directors. Over the years, he has become one of the football team's biggest fans.

“I am a nut when it comes to college football and I love to follow my Ichabods,” Fenley said. “I have season tickets and I'm



David Fenley, BBA '76, JD '79, in front of the Neptune Fountain at the Country Club Plaza. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

able to make it to virtually every one of the home games. I get to see some of my friends from the fraternity and the football team. We tailgate together and watch the games. It's a lot of fun to keep up with people.”

Fenley has also stayed connected to Washburn by joining the Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation board of trustees in 2008, and by teaching a course on accounting and the law each spring. He believes it is his responsibility to give back financially as well, having endowed a chair at the law school and contributing to the new law school building.

“I think it's a duty we all have to give back to the school financially,” he said. “The law school gave us tremendous educations. I feel like it's almost a responsibility for us to give back, and that's what I've tried to do.”